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SHORT STORIES
A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 606. FOR WEEK ENDING AUGUST 11TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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A SHOT IN THE DARK.

A Tale of the Veld.

"IS that all you have to say to me, Prusy?"

The girl was leaning over the low stone wall of the cattle kraal, her eyes fixed upon a cloud of dust which was moving slowly across the great treeless expanse of waterless waste, on the edge of which the Brandon homestead was situated.

The sun was dropping to the west, and the Brandon stock was returning to the pens after a day on the veld. Prusy Brandon rested her arms on the wall and looked out over the bare, brown, hummocky plain.

But in the picture at which Prusy was gazing, with an absorption so intense that she seemed utterly oblivious of the companion by her side, neither westering sun, nor rugged veld, neither distant height, nor lowing herd found any place. Her eye was filled with the vision of a white-painted gate set in a hedge of flaming red cactus.

At the gate stood a man and a maid. The man's head was half hidden under the rim of the broad-brimmed hat the girl was wearing, and he was talking rapidly in low earnest tones.

The gate led from the horse-paddock into the fruit-garden; and the cool, scent-laden breeze of evening, rustled musically among the leaves of the pear-tree overhead, while the man, who held the girl's hand imprisoned in his strong, firm clasp, continued to pour into her willing ear the story which he had ridden thirty miles to tell. And though her cheek had flushed, and her eye had kindled, as the hot, passionate words

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had rushed tumultuously from her lips, she had let him return without an answer. Now, as she stood there gazing dreamily across the veld, Prusy Brandon knew that Frank Bartols had taken her heart back to Amersdorp.

"Is that all you have to say to me, Prusy?"

The repetition of the question in tones that betrayed both sullenness and irritation, accompanied by the laying

Oblivious of the companion by her side.

of a rude hand upon her shoulder, brought the girl back from the flower-scented orchard to the pungent-smelling cattle-kraal with a shock that jarred every nerve and fibre.

She turned and confronted the speaker.

"No, Jacob," said the girl, shaking off the hand, and drawing a quick, deep breath. "No, it is not all. I have told you before, as I have told you to-day, that I cannot honestly hold out to you any hope of being able to give you any other reply than the one I have given you already. But since——"

"You may change your mind," urged the man. "All women——"

"I shall not change my mind," returned the girl quietly.

"You've done it before, Prusy."

The girl looked him full in the face. There was a challenge in her eye.

He dropped his instantly.

"I say you've done it before," he repeated doggedly, "and may do it again—when you're tired of that——"

"How dare you?" she cried, stamping her foot.

"Anyhow, you were glad enough to see me till Frank Bartols came to live over at Amesdorp," sneered the man, devouring her wolfish eyes.

"I should be glad to see you now, Jacob; on the old terms. But I'm afraid that's——" she hesitated, "—— impossible," snopped Jacob, completing the sentence for her. "Well, I'm glad you recognise the position, if you refuse to accept the responsibility. Did you really suppose that that ridiculous brother-and-sister arrangement could continue? It was all very well whilst we remained children, but——"

"We shall not mend matters by discussing them, Jacob. Better leave them to time."

"Time!" he exclaimed, a curious gleam coming into his eyes. "Yes, I believe you're right, Prusy. Time is my best ally. Old Uncle Steve's half breed will find himself short in his reckoning on the question of time."

The girl drew back a space and surveyed him contemptuously. He shifted uneasily under the withering glance which she bent upon him. The man gave a laugh and forced himself to look at her.

The steady disdainful gaze of her scornful eyes seemed to shrivel his soul.

He turned away, and throwing himself across the low stone wall began to whistle.

"What are you waiting for, Jacob Maartens?" asked the girl, in a low impressive voice.

"For the end of the story you set out to tell," returned the man, a strongly cynical inflection in his tone. "It ought to be interesting; since upon it will depend the circumstances under which our next meeting will probably take place," and he recommenced the performance which her question had interrupted.

The girl did not speak. She remained very still. Her breath came in quick short gasps. The moment was tense with emotion. She was not ignorant of the feeling which existed amongst a large section of the Dutch population. Could Jacob really have intended to convey a threat? Her whole frame quivered.

Colonial-born, of English parentage, educated at Cape Town and brought up on the veld, Prusy was refined in manner but fearless in spirit. For Jacob to suppose that he could move her by a threat was an insult to her birth and an affront to her breeding. It showed also how little he understood her after all.

His words, she guessed, could only refer to the movement against the Englanders which had been going on now more or less openly all over the place for months. Her father had said only yesterday that it would come to a fight; and the District Magistrate from Newcastle, who was on a visit, had advised him to send the women-folk into Natal. But Ned Brandon had lived half his life amongst the Dutchmen. He counted many friends among the farmers round Normanton; and though he had sometimes wondered how things might go if a stranger who knew not Joseph were set over them, he had consoled himself with the reflection that at the worst the border was only forty miles away; and thereupon had determined to hold on to the last.

With the rumours which from time to time had reached her ears, Prusy had not concerned herself much. The veld was her home, and the children of the Boer families had been her playmates, as the son and grandson of her nearest Dutch neighbours were now her lovers. The talk of the transport riders, of the fossickers, and others who came and went, did not greatly affect Prusy. That was her father's business.

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But the words of Jacob Maartens had a nasty ring about them. They sounded sinister and menacing.

Her hand clenched and her bosom heaved. She couldn't trust herself to speak. She must tell him how she despised him if she opened her lips.

Ned Brandon on his way to the sheep pens for the evening count-in, shouted a greeting to Maartens as he passed; but Jacob was very slow about responding.

Ned opined there was a quarrel; and remembering his own courting days, whistled his favourite collie to heel and passed on.

"Are you ashamed or afraid to finish?" growled Maartens at last, provoked beyond endurance by the girl's silence. "Because if you've nothing more to say to me, I've something to say to you; but I'd rather you had your say first."

"You are angry with me Jacob, because it is not in my power to do as you wish."

"Not in your power? That's a lie to begin with," broke in the man vehemently.

He struck the wall with his fist, while a dull red glow stole into his face.

"You can send him away if you've a mind to. But it's Jacob Maartens who's to trek, and Frank Bartols who's to stay. You've made it up between you.

"Tell the truth, missy; and you'd rather see Maartens stretched out by the rooineks, than hear that Bartols had been scratched by a thorn-brake.

"Well, maybe it's yourself will have to trek, sweetheart; but I can't promise that Mynheer Franz will be escort. He——"

"Stop! stop! You've said enough, Jacob," cried the girl. "I will hear no more," and she turned to leave the spot, but Maartens seized her by the wrists.

"Are you mad?" she hissed, struggling to be free.

"Yes, I think I must be," he answered between his teeth. "It's Prusy Brandon's work. 'Tis she has driven me over the border, and roused the devil that lurks in every man's heart."

"You will make me hate you, Jacob."

He laughed.

"Hate me? Ha! Ha! Wait, *myn lieb*, wait. I won't ask you to finish your story. I know it. But hear mine. You have killed him."

He paused.

"You understand?—the man who has taken the place that should be mine."

She clutched at the wall for support.

"Frank Bartols is dead. Prusy Brandon has killed him."

She gave a low cry. He stifled an oath and hurried on.

"Bartols is a spy—a traitor; an enemy to his country. The *Schweinhund* that he is—he had an English mother. He was in their cursed country when his father died. Better had old Stephen let him stay there. The man is no Africander. He is a *verdammt Engelschman*, and a spy.

"He has been carrying news to the rooineks in Natal; but, *Himmel!* he will carry no more. I have only been waiting for this to denounce him.

"To-morrow, your lover, Frank Bartols, will be arrested.

"A week hence, every Africander from the Cape to the Limpopo, will be on the march; and we shall sweep every *verdammt* Englisher into the sea.

"I came here to-day, Fräulein, simple Jacob Maartens, ready to offer my protection in return for your promise. But to-morrow, I shall be Field-Cornet Maartens, and my first duty will be to warn Baas Brandon that he is suspected of harbouring traitors and that his farm is confiscated to the State."

"As for that Judas," he added significantly, "You will never call Frank Bartols, husband, Missy."

She stood up and faced him.

"You can go, Jacob. There is nothing more to say. Father will deal with the matter you speak of when it is put before him."

She spoke in hard, level tones. Her eye glittered, but her voice was firm and her pulse steady.

He glowered at her sullenly.

"Then you will let Frank Bartols go to his death without a pang?"

"Jacob!"

He started.

There was a note in her voice that he had never heard in it before.

"Have you no pity? Why do you not leave me?"

"You love him?"

She flung up her hand.

He thought she was about to strike him and recoiled.

"Coward!" she panted.

"And you will let him die."

"Brute!"

"What will it profit you? You refuse me; but you sacrifice him. Take me, and you give him a chance to die honourably in the future, instead of shamefully——"

"Go! go before I kill you," she cried, advancing upon him, her bosom heaving and her nostrils a-quiver. "I hate you Jacob Maartens, I *hate* you; and remember,

"You will make me hate you, Jacob."

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that for any evil that befalls Frank Bartols I will hold you to account."

He glared at her for a moment with uncomprehending eyes; then he lowered his gaze and turned away.

* * * * *

"Steady, Jenny! steady, good horse."

The sound of her mistress's voice, and the caressing hand laid upon the mare's neck had their effect. With a low whinny the intelligent creature presently settled down again into a long, lolloping stride.

She had swerved suddenly from the track at the Tower Rock, just after entering the five mile poort about mid-distance between Normanton and Amesdorp.

There was a good sprinkle of stars overhead, but the throat of the gully was narrow, and the heavy masses of rock which overhung the track for the first mile or two made the going in places as dark as a tunnel.

"Wonder what could have made her shy?" thought Prusy. "She ought to know every inch of the ground, every rugged rock and naked boulder. Must have smelt something, I expect—Kaffirs, likely, trekking into Swaziland till the trouble here's over. There's been a lot of natives on the move this fortnight past."

The mare kept on down the poort at a steady, even pace, knocking sparks out of the scattered flints as she spurned them with her flying heels.

There was more light now, for the defile broadened out at the Amesdorp end, and already the open veld could be dimly seen stretching away under the winking stars.

"Old Uncle Steve will think me daft; and Frank ——"

What was that?

She pulled up her mount so suddenly that the mare was almost thrown on her haunches.

Prusy knew the sound too well to be in doubt, but the question rose involuntarily to her lips.

It was the crack of a rifle—of two rifles, fired simultaneously, away up towards the further end of the long gully from which she was just emerging.

Her mind went back to the Tower Rock and the shying horse; and in a moment she found herself trembling at some unknown danger mercifully escaped. But intuitively she felt that, whatever the peril, it was

It was a shot in the dark, but it went home.

Frank who was threatened; and calling upon "Jenny" for a spurt, the mare gave a snort and went away across the veld like the scurrying wind.

Away across the veld, like the scurrying wind.

Prusy had said not a word in the house about the interview with Maartens. Brandon had shown some surprise at not seeing Jacob at supper; but had excused him in his own mind on the score of the "tiff"; while openly setting it down to the bad news from Pretoria.

"Oom Paul, I hear, has made up his mind for a fight; so I expect Jacob's a bit shy of sitting down with us, wife," had been Ned's observation on finding Maartens was absent; and thereafter the talk had run mostly on the chances of conflict, and the fortune of war.

When the family retired, Prusy had gone quietly to the stable, and saddling "Jenny," had started on her long night ride to Amesdorp. The revelation of Maartens, she was convinced, was nothing but a diabolical plot to remove a rival; which the threatened outbreak of hostilities rendered feasible. Her object therefore was to warn Bartols, and at the same time to tell him, without prudery or reserve, what a week ago he had tried in vain to wring from her unwilling lips—that he was the man, the only man, who held in his keeping her fresh young heart. That confession she owed him.

A Brandon girl, with a revolver in her holster, she was not likely to be afraid of anything she might meet on the veld or in the kloofs. But that rifle shot in the

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dead middle of the night had made her tremble. It awakened such an infinity of possibilities.

When she reached Amesdorp Frank Bartols had left, to join his commando at Standerton.

* * * * *

There was a wounded half-breed found in the Long Poort next morning with a Mauser rifle lying by his side; and scarce a dozen yards away lay the dead body of Jacob Maartens of Maartenspruit.

The injured man was brought into Normanton, and thanks to his Kaffir blood lived long enough to tell the tale.

He was half-brother to Maartens, who on the old Baas's death had hounded Setabo off the homestead; and not long since had done him a foul injury, and Setabo had sworn to be revenged if he had to wait years for it.

The mines, where he had been employed, being shut down in view of the near approach of war, he was trekking for Embesterk in Swaziland, when a longing seized him to go and have a look at the old homestead at Maartenspruit. He went, was recognized, and beaten off the place by Maartens and two Boeren armed with *sjamboks*.

At Helder's Farm he stole a rifle, and was on his way back to watch for Jacob when by good chance he met him last night on the veld.

Maartens was talking to somebody in the dark—to somebody that Setabo couldn't see, talking a lot, and wandering about in a silly sort of fashion. He didn't ride straight on, but kept pulling up his horse and looking all round, as if uncertain of his road.

"I crept up as near as I could," said the man, "hoping to get in a shot. I knew I should have only chance for one; and if I missed—well, Jacob was a dead shot. But he seemed crazed with the fancy that someone was dodging him, for he wheeled his horse right round, time and agen; his mouth full of strange threats, and shook his fist at the dark.

"After a bit he took to laughing. 'Peared he'd a notion that somebody was going to ride over from Norm'ton to Amesdorp in the dark, and it amused him. 'He'd wait for them,' he said, 'in the Long Poort; and they'd ride together—but not to Amesdorp; no, to—' and then he burst into such a queer laugh that I hated him worse than ever. So I just trekked off to the Tower Rock, meaning to give him what I'd got in the Mauser when he came by. Hardly had I reached the spot however, when I heard the sound of hoofs. Somebody was coming—Maartens?

"Stepping out of my hiding place, I saw the long skirt of a woman sweep past me in the dark.

"Then I heard the thud of other hoofs in the distance and I got ready for Jacob.

"That flying figure had brought old memories to mind. Had I been possessed of a dozen lives I would have given them all for his.

"Well, I didn't have to wait many minutes. Down the poort he came reviling his luck, and I got in my shot; but he was able to return it, and I shan't be long after.

"Yet I have this satisfaction Baas. He lived long enough to know who had sent him to the Evil One, and I spared him not to the last.

"It was a shot in the dark, but it went home; and now Setabo is ready to follow, whither the blackhearted Dutchman has gone.

"Long live the Great White Queen!"

H. HUNTER.

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An Australian Recluse.

Two of Mr. Robinson's bullocks had broken from the paddock at Toonarbin Run, during the night, and Ralph Robinson, their owner's nephew, and one of the stock-keepers, had started out in search of them on horseback, with a couple of collie dogs loping along in the rear.

Australian scenery is grandly impressive always. Particularly so at early sunrise, when nature is shaking off the night's slumber. Toonarbin Range was aglow with golden light, peak upon peak rising skyward as far as the eye could reach.

The missing bullocks were seen about noon in company with a herd of half-wild cattle. Jenkins, the stock-keeper, flourished his stock-whip in their direction.

"Stay you here, Mr. Ralph," he said hurriedly, "while I cut the two strays out from the herd—you head them if they turn away from the run," and off he galloped.

It was many a long day before Ralph saw him again. Instead of breaking, the herd plunged forward *en masse*, the bullocks in the midst. Cattle and keeper disappeared in a cloud of dust. One of the collies followed at the heels of the stockman's horse. The other remained behind with Ralph. This collie suddenly started a big kangaroo—a "boomer," or man kangaroo, as the colonists say—from the under scrub.

Before Ralph could pull his holster pistol, the boomer was out of sight in a little grove of oak at the right.

Forgetting drover and bullocks, Ralph urged his horse forward in pursuit, guided by the wild barking of the collie, and an occasional glimpse of the mouse-coloured animal making tremendous bounds through the scrub, which was broken by patches of clear up and in places. Kangaroos had become scarce around Toonarbin Run, and Ralph Robinson was an enthusiastic huntsman.

Absorbed in the ardour of the chase, Ralph did not think of the danger of losing himself in the bush. On and still on, when, suddenly emerging from the thick growth, the banks of a tortuous creek appeared before him.

In the shallow part of the stream stood the boomer at bay. Not being able to use its hind foot, armed with its long, sharp-pointed claw, the huge beast, almost as large as an average sized man, had laid hold of the poor collie and thrust it under water, despite the dog's best efforts at self-preservation.

Springing from his saddle, Ralph balanced the holster pistol across the bend of his left arm, and fired with correct aim. The big animal fell with a splash, shot through the heart. With infinite difficulty Ralph dragged the boomer ashore while the half-drowned collie sat panting on the bank. Then the young stockman began for the first time to look about him.

He was surrounded by virgin forest, whose silence was only broken by the babble of the creek flowing over some stony obstructions, and the chatter of occasional flocks of parrots flying high over the everglade. It was noon by the sun, and having heedlessly left his pocket-compass behind, Ralph, like the eloquent orator, "knew no north, no south, no east, no west." Even the peculiar-shaped, snow-clad crests of the Toonarbin Range seemed to have changed their individuality. In fact, Ralph was lost.

But he was a plucky young fellow, who had lived from boyhood on his uncle's stock farm in the wildest portion of the Warragara district. Twice before had he been similarly placed, and after hours of wandering, made his way back. The first thing he did was to cut off the boomer's immense tail, not as a trophy, but as a choice tit-bit for a roast. This he secured behind the saddle, and, whistling to the collie, led his horse up from the banks of the creek, where he stood for a moment trying to guess at the points of the compass.

A slight rustling in the long grass behind him, and a short, quick bark from the sheep-dog, caused Ralph to turn his head quickly, at the same time involuntarily stretching out one hand in the direction of his holster pistol.

Quicker than a flash, his right wrist was clutched and held in a vice-like grip. At the same moment a laughing, ebony-hued face, showing far more of intelligence than is seen in the features of the average Australian native, was brought within range of his astonished vision.

Now Ralph was by no means a weakling; yet, though his laughing captor seemed little more than a boy, he was astonished to find that he could not release his wrist from the wiry black fingers until the latter relaxed of their own accord.

"No use, white fellow! Mayfu *cobung matong* (very strong)!" said the black, good-naturedly.

He wore a sort of sheepskin coat without arms, and short leather breeches—nothing else—and Ralph saw at a glance that the stranger was unlike any of the natives employed in and about the stock farm.

"Who are you?" he asked, bluntly.

"Mayfu," was the brief response.

And Mayfu professed entire ignorance of the locality, his people—so he said, with pantomimic gesture—living further away to the north, in the Wallagiera, or Valley of the Mountain of Fire.

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One peculiarity Ralph noticed: that while Mayfu used at times the singular dialect of the Australian black, he could speak a fairly good "pidgin English."

Thus, as a little later Ralph produced some cold "damper," with a view to lunch, while Mayfu started a fire, the latter exclaimed, in reference to the tail of the boomer he had begun to skin:

"Baal flying doe this one, mine think it," meaning that the kangaroo must have been of uncommon size, while the next breath he asked, with a sharp glance in Ralph's face: "What matter, white fellow? You look like sick." For all at once Ralph had felt a strange dizziness and weakness come over him, not unlike that which is a prelude to the fever of the Australian lowlands. His appetite suddenly left him; the cold damper and roast boomer tail became alike repugnant.

"I *am* sick," he said, wearily, and lay down on the purple heath as he spoke.

Mayfu unstrapped the blanket from behind Ralph's saddle, and arranged it for a pillow. He then fastened the horse with a picket rope, and getting water from the creek, bathed the sick man's burning temples.

It was midsummer, and the air, even as nightfall came on, was mild and balmy.

Too dizzy and confused to think, or even care, Ralph lay in a half-waking drowse, hearing the thousand voices of night in an Australian forest, seeing the fireflies blazing through the air, and conscious that Mayfu squatted beside him, and seemed never to close his eyes in slumber. At early dawn the black took the tin "billy" from behind Ralph's saddle, and disappeared. Half-an-hour later he returned. The billy was half full of glossy green leaves having a peculiar aromatic smell. These Mayfu steeped in water over the fire.

"Drink, my master," he said authoritatively, holding the tin to the white youth's parched lips while he supported his head. The draught seemed to give him a sort of unnatural physical strength, though Ralph himself, so nearly as he knows, was half-delirious when, a little later, Mayfu helped him into his saddle.

What followed was like the wild fantasies of a confused dream. Half supported on his horse by Mayfu's strong arm, Ralph was indistinctly conscious of hours—it might have been days—of continuous ongoing, through great defiles and wooded plains, over grass-clad hills, and in primeval forests. Then the way led upward, among immense elevations of volcanic origin. Lava and pumice were crushed by the horse's feet.

Up and still up among the eternal snows; yet strange as it may seem, Ralph seemed neither conscious of cold, hunger, loss of sleep, or fatigue. From time to time Mayfu gave him to drink from a hollow gourd of the infusion he had prepared.

When the light of reason dawned again in Ralph's mind, he was lying on a couch of fragrant grass. Above his head was a bark roof; the sides of the smoke-stained interior were of plain slabs driven deep in the earth. Through the open doorway and between the trunks of great fern trees he caught a glimpse of mountain slopes, covered with dense verdure rising on every side.

Near him, on a pile of kangaroo skins, sat a girl, seemingly a few years younger than himself. And in all his dreams Ralph had never seen anything half so beautiful. Her skin was dazzlingly fair, her eyes dark and lustrous, and her hair, intensely black and silky, fell over the folds of a simple dress of calico in a wonderful cloud.

No, he was not dreaming. For close beside her was Nero, the collie dog, who, as his master stretched out his wasted hand, licked it, whining a joyful recognition.

"Where am I?" Ralph feebly asked; "and please—who are you?"

"In the Valley of Wallagiera," was the quiet reply; "and I am Valetta; my father is the chief man of our settlement."

But it was not till two or three days afterwards, when Ralph, strengthened by savoury broths, was able to sit outside in the cooling shade, that he learnt from Valetta, who had constituted herself his nurse, more particulars as to the Wallagiera settlement.

It would seem that nearly two hundred years before, some Europeans had been shipwrecked on the west coast of the island continent. They had penetrated far inland, where they were taken prisoners by some of the Garri tribes. On condition that their lives should be spared, all but four had taken native wives.

Their descendants, a hundred years later, had little or no trace of native blood, and were socially ostracized by the Garris on that account. Banded together, they penetrated the interior, hitherto untrodden by man.

With them was a missionary, who had wandered from the coast to the Garri country, where he had been but ill-received. The little community finally reached the Valley of Wallagiera, where they located permanently.

Ralph was not lacking in ambition, nor was he weary of the world. But a stronger motive than either I have mentioned prevented his return to civilization.

Valetta was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen, and as good as she was beautiful. Ralph had no one in the world belonging to him excepting his Uncle George, who had a family of his own.

* * * * *

Nearly ten years later, an athletic, bronzed, full-bearded young man of thirty rode into the yard of Mr. George Robinson's extensive stock farm in the Warragara district just at sundown.

The helper who came forward to take his horse was an elderly man, with a peculiarly shaped blue scar across his nose. The stranger glanced inquiringly in his face.

"Well, Dick Jenkins," he said, quietly, "did you cut out the bullocks you and I went in search of from Uncle George's stock farm, nine or ten years ago?"

Old Dick started, whistled, and uttered a great exclamation, which brought half the household out on the stoop.

"Well, durn my cabbage tree if it ain't Mr. Ralph!" he shouted.

And it was. Yet no persuasion or pleadings on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, availed to keep Ralph with them beyond the one night.

"My wife and children await my coming with anxious hearts, and Mayfu, my servant man, will hardly sleep till I come back to the Valley of Wallagiera," he said, in answer to all solicitation to stay longer. An impulse to look once more upon civilization had seized the recluse for so many years, and he had obeyed it. But his only longing—the impulse gratified—was to return.

"Yes, I am perfectly happy," he said at parting. "My wife is the most beautiful and best woman in the world, and my children are like her. Our wants are simple, and we never go beyond the valley for them. Farewell,"

Nor would Ralph suffer anyone to accompany him on his return.

"So far as we can prevent it, we want no one to enter Wallagiera Valley," he told them.

And to this day it is not known that any have.

But Ralph will never again return to civilization. Why should he, indeed? W. S. L.

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Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

XVIII.—HE TAKES A COUNTRY HOUSE FOR THE SUMMER

"AND what do you think now?" shouted Mr. Bowser as he entered the hall the other evening and gave his hat a wave or two round his head before hanging it up.

"Have you bought a—a cow?" asked Mrs. Bowser as she recalled that he had spoken of new milk cows at the breakfast table.

"No cows! No spring tonics! No fire escapes! Rejoice, my dear woman, rejoice, and call me the best husband in the world while I give you an old fashioned hug!"

Mr. Bowser had taken a lease of a house in the country. It was a country house out in the country, and seven different doctors had told him that a month of agricultural air, with climbing trees, sliding down haystacks, and jumping fences would eradicate the rheumatism from his system, and bring back the flush of health to his wife's cheeks.

The house was furnished, and they were to go out the next afternoon with their cook and take full possession and begin to receive benefits.

"But why don't you go alone and see the farm and come back and tell me what you think of it?" protested Mrs. Bowser.

"Call me the best husband in the world while I give you an old-fashioned hug."

"Because I have already signed a lease for two months," he replied. "It's two hours' journey in the train, and it'll be a romantic little jaunt for us both. It's a mile from the station, and as we saunter along we'll pick daisies and run after rabbits and be young again."

She was dubious and he enthusiastic, and the result was that they were set down at the station nearest the farmhouse at six o'clock the next evening.

There were no daisies along the highway as they walked. They did not see any rabbits. There was one old crow flying about overhead, and a good many mudholes underfoot, and with all his enthusiasm Mr. Bowser couldn't work up any romance. By and by they reached the house, and as they stood at the gate he said:

"Now, then, this is the place, and we'll walk in. Isn't it a gem of a farm?"

"I don't see the gem exactly!" replied Mrs. Bowser as she looked about. "This can't be the house."

"Why, certainly it is."

"But there is no verandah, no blinds, no lawn, no flowers! The house seems never to have been painted, and, you see, most of the glass is broken. I never saw a more dreary place."

"I believe it's been used for a lunatic asylum!" added the cook.

"Now, don't begin to find fault!" protested Mr. Bowser. What can you expect of a farmhouse? We came out here for our health, not to find a palace. In two days I'll make everything shine like a new pin. Just observe that sunset, will you! By George, but how pure this air is! Why, I feel a year younger already!"

"Where are the trees?" asked Mrs. Bowser as she waded through the grass and weeds and sat down on the front steps of the house.

"Trees! Why, there's one, and—well, all doctors agree that trees round a house are unhealthy. We didn't come out here to get ill, but to get well. However, I have no doubt we can buy all the trees we want. Just look at that glorious sky!"

"I'm looking at the ground and fences and that old shed of a barn!" she sighed.

"You said we were to have cows and sheep and pigs and fowls. Where are they?"

"Yes, where are they?" added the cook as she listened for the clucking of hens.

"There's the cow right down there," replied Mr. Bowser as he pointed to a brindled skeleton looking at them over a fence. "As for the others, they'll be driven over to-morrow probably. I suppose I ought to go and milk the cow this evening, but as I'm rather tired she can wait. You just come inside if you want to see how cozy we are going to be this summer."

He unlocked the door, and they found whitewashed walls, rusty furniture and cobwebs galore. The place hadn't the cheerfulness of a hospital nor the conveniences of a canal-barge.

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The cook reported a foot of water in the cellar and the kitchen worse than a stable, and Mrs. Bowser sat down on a knockkneed chair and wept, or had started to, when Mr. Bowser angrily exclaimed:

"Now, then, what's the matter with you? What's wrong with this house? What's all this boohooing about?"

"I—I can't live in such a place!" she sobbed.

"Oh, you can't! Can't live in the house where numerous scions of the aristocracy have passed their summers, eh! This is my reward for planning a nice little surprise! Haven't you got sense enough to see that two days' work will change all this—make a little palace of the place? I didn't expect to find things spick and span, but you might just give me a chance."

Mrs. Bowser realised that tears would be of no avail after things had gone so far as they had, and she wiped them away and tried to look more hopeful. Mr. Bowser wandered about outside until the cook had managed to get a bite to eat out of the provisions they had brought with them, and darkness had fallen upon the land when he said:

"You just chirp up and see how things will be to-morrow. Ah, but what's that?"

"It's a cricket singing," replied Mrs. Bowser.

"That's it—a regular, genuine cricket, alive and kicking, and none of your make believes to amuse children! When did we ever hear a cricket sing in town? By George, but that's a lullaby and no mistake! Think of it, Mrs. Bowser—genuine crickets to sing us to sleep in our own house!"

"Y-yes," she answered as she looked round with a sinking heart.

"And listen to that! There goes the song of the meadow lark to welcome us to our new home! If that isn't romantic, then I'd like to know what is! He is so glad we've come that he can't wait."

"Do meadow larks sing at eight o'clock at night?" she asked, knowing the sound to be the hoot of an owl in a tree beside the old barn.

"Not always—not unless they have special reason for it, as in this case," he wisely replied. "This bird probably saw us when we arrived, and, knowing that you'd feel a little lonely he remained awake to carol his song. Ah, Mrs. Bowser, give me the country above all other parts of earth! I can see an improvement in your looks already. Wait three days—a week—and then you'll bless me for what I have done."

"There goes the song of the meadow lark to welcome us to our new home."

Mrs. Bowser was ready to "bless" him then and there, but she held her peace and said she was tired and wanted to go to bed.

"And awake in the dewy morn to hear the robins and blackbirds and nightingales singing their souls away!" he cried out with a forced laugh as the owl uttered a hoot that lifted his hair. "I wonder where the cook is?"

"She's out on the doorstep crying, and I shan't blame her if she leaves us the first thing in the morning."

"She won't leave, and you'll wake up to laugh over the tears you've shed to-night. By George, but hear that rook, will you? I say, now, but there are people in town who'd give any amount to hear that song!"

"Don't you know a frog from a rook?" indignantly demanded Mrs. Bowser. "You'll hear 'em singing all night, and there'll be bats and owls and polecats to keep 'em company. If I'm found dead in the morning, you needn't bother about taking the remains home and holding a funeral. Just dump me into a swamp and tell the folks that I died of too much summer health!"

M. QUAD.

[Next Week: "His Night Adventures at His Country House."]

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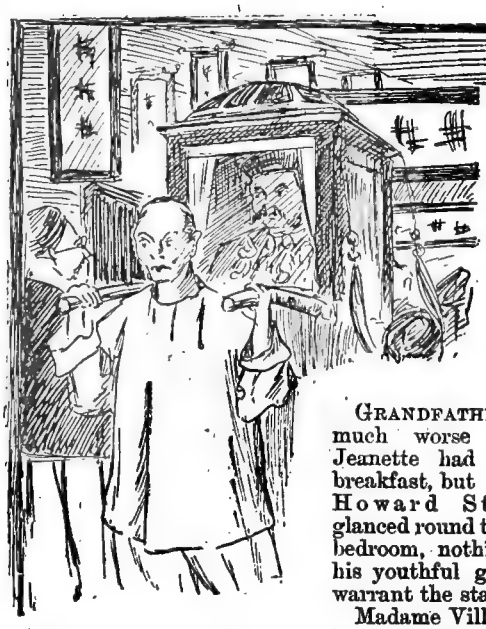

THE LOST FLAG.

GRANDFATHER was much worse to-day, Jeanette had said, at breakfast, but as little Howard Stanley glanced round the white bedroom, nothing met his youthful glance to warrant the statement.

Madame Villette was in the big chair by the bedside as usual, counting her beads.

From time to time she glanced wonderingly at the bed on which Grandfather lay, then turned away with a little whimper of senile amusement.

"One hundred and two years old," she mumbled, "One hundred and two years old. *Mon Dieu*, 'tis a great age—a great age for a man. To think he was a man grown when I was born, and I shall be eighty-two this coming Christmas. But then as I always tell Jeanette, he never will die till he gets the lost flag. Besides," as if summing up to herself the full secret of Grandfather's longevity, "he fought with the great Emperor—*Mon Dieu!* he fought with the great Emperor."

Aye! he fought with the great Emperor, this scarcely-breathing relic of a bygone age—fought and suffered for the honour of the little Corsican with the big high forehead, and impenetrable grey eyes.

Often did the English boy steal into the quiet room and listen almost fearfully to the ancient dame, for ever crooning the monotonous refrain.

"——great age. *Ma foi!* a great age for a man. But then he fought with the great Emperor. *Mon Dieu!* he fought with the great Emperor."

After which, she would invariably turn with awed amazement, pathetic in its senility, towards the great four-post bed, on which lay the barely animated remains of the man who, at Waterloo, had led the — Chasseurs when they died, almost to a man, for the glory of France.

Gaunt and great, its outline showing sharply along the line of white sheet, lay what was now barely more than the skeleton of the man, who in his day had carried many times the standard of the 10th Chasseurs to victory, and finally led the last great charge of his regiment at Waterloo.

Only the occasional flicker of the eyelids, or the shrivelled-up lips, eternally murmuring, "The flag! The flag!" betokened existence.

To the little English boy, staying with his mother at the Old Breton Farmhouse, "Grandfather" was a subject of awe—a grim sign-post marking the grave of a dead era.

He was so old—so very old, and beneath those yellow eyelids, rarely uplifted, were eyes that had once looked on so many peoples and places, and had seen the great battles and rich harvests of death, that had gone to the shaping-out of Napoleon's great road of conquest.

And those withered skinny hands lying on the counterpane, that looked like the shrivelled up claws in the mummy cases Howard had so often seen in the British Museum, had, once upon a time, gripped and swung the big sabre that hung by the clock in the hall, and killed so many men—how many?—the English schoolboy often wondered with awe.

On the romantic and sensitively constructed mind of the English schoolboy, all these associations exercised a powerful effect, and as he crept into the room on this hot August day, and looked at the thing on the bed, he experienced a vague feeling of dread.

The blind was drawn over the one big window, but not low enough to exclude a narrow streak of the sunlight which lay across the floor like a golden rod.

The boy vaguely felt it to be out of place! it seemed strangely incongruous, in that room so full of the tragedy of human existence.

Madame Villette ceased her mumblings and looked up as he entered.

"Come in, little boy." she whispered, "he," nodding towards the bed, "is very low to-day, But there, little one, one hundred and two is a powerful age. Holy Mother! Yes, 'tis a powerful age for a man, but he fought with the great Emperor too. *Mon Dieu!* he fought with the great Emperor."

The lips of the weird figure on the bed twisted themselves together as if to speak, otherwise the old man's form betrayed no existence.

"—— Emperor; The flag!" came a husky whisper at length, which to the English boy sounded like a whisper from a tomb.

"The flag! The flag!"

The last two words died away in a faint whistling moan. Madame Villette nodded comprehensively.

"Aye!" she muttered, "the flag, the flag, 'tis ever 'the flag, the flag.' He has been like that all day. 'The flag, the flag.' He can't die," she continued solemnly, "till he finds the flag. I always tell Jeanette so, but she merely shrugs her shoulders and laughs, and says he will die when his time comes, flag or no flag. Ah! 'tis ever the way of the young, to laugh at their elders. But

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you'll see, little boy, you'll see he will never die, till he holds the flag in his hand once more."

Often had Howard sat in the long, low kitchen, of an evening, and listened to the story of the lost flag.

Jeanette, Madame's middle-aged daughter, who looked after the farm, and took in English boarders during the summer months, had told him all about it many times.

How, at Waterloo, when the tide of victory was ebbing away, at last, from the feet of the great Emperor, the brave French soldiers threw themselves aga n and again against the grim British squares, only to be beaten back, vainly, or to die gloriously.

And none had fought more bravely than Grandfather's old regiment, the 10th Chasseurs.

Again and again had they hurled themselves right on to the British bayonets—and their brave horses fell like ripe corn before the sickle, till, at last, but a mere handful

was left of the flower of the French Cavalry.

And then, with quickening breath, Jeanette would tell him how Grandfather, with the flag of the regiment in his hand, had rallied what was left, for the last great charge.

But ah! *Mon Dieu!* they all died in a heap before the Brit sh guns—all except Grandfather, who, although pinned down under his horse, still held the flag, and fought on, till the stock of a British musket laid him low. And the Emperor who loved a gallant action, even in the hour of his downfall, had said it was as brave a deed as he had ever seen, and said the wounded Chasseur should have a Captain's rank when the fortunes of war turned in France's favour once more.

That was why his soldiers were always ready to die for the Emperor—he spared none, but he never forgot those who served him well. But Napoleon, as everybody knows, died far away from France, and when Grandfather recovered from the blow which the British soldier had given him, he had lost all memory for anything but the captured flag.

Of course Jeanette was not born then, but Madame, her mother, was never tired of telling the story! How they had brought him back to the old farmhouse, and sat him in the gre t chimney nook, where he cried like a little child, all through the warm summer days for the flag he had lost.

And so it had been throughout all those weary long years, till he took to his bed, where he did not cry quite so often

But it was all so sad—so very, very sad.

And then Jeanette, with the big tears standing in her eyes, would suddenly quiet down, ashamed that her enthusiasm should have outweighed her religious principles.

"Ah! but war is such a cruel thing," she would wind up, "and there is no more bad blood between the French and the British now. We are friends! Pray to the Holy Mother, *petite*, that we may always remain friends, for war is such a cruel thing, *Mon Dieu!* such a cruel thing."

And to-day as the English boy stood in the room with the great four-post bed n the corner, he thought of the story Jeanette had so often told—of Grandfather and the lost flag. And, as if in echo to his thoughts, the shrivelled up lips which had fallen back into the toothless mouth once more whispered like the echo from the world of dead things "The flag! The flag!"

The pitiful cry brought the tears into the boy's eyes.

Grandfather wanted a flag *so* badly. Why couldn't they have given him one—any sort would do—surely he was too old and feeble to discern the difference, and perhaps it would calm the awful yearning, which pierced the sensitive boy's heart like a knife.

Any kind of flag, would—

Then an idea suddenly flashed across the boy's mind—something, he wondered why, had never occurred to him before.

Flags!

Why, there were two or three in the old chest which his mother had brought away from Rome, when Uncle Herbert died.

Uncle Herbert had been an antiquarian and had spent his time an l money in searching Europe for relics of the past, till a length, one day at Rome, he, himself, had been relegated to the regions of the past tense, by an attack of typhoid.

The iron-bound chest had constituted his mother's share in the eccentric old man's will.

Relics, however, exercised no attraction for her, but a question of sentiment towards the testator constrained her to keep the old trunk, and so it had accompanied them as far as France on their way back to England.

"Grandfather wanted a flag *so* badly, and perhaps," thought Howard, "he would rest and go to sleep, if he were given one of the old ragged banners in Uncle Herbert's chest.

"He could 'make believe' it was really the lost flag, and the result would be just the same."

Thoroughly imbued with the idea, Howard, without a word to Madame Villette, crept out of the room, and hurried towards the room where the worm-eaten chest lay in company with the other luggage.

It stood in a corner and as usual, was unlocked.

Inside were piled up all sorts of odds and ends—

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drinking cups of battered metal—fantastic looking, brass-mounted firearms and Italian daggers with many a grim and silent story hanging on their rusty blades.

With feverish haste, the boy removed the heterogeneous mass that lay on top and after much tugging arrived at what he sought.

They lay almost at the bottom.

Three old standards, frayed and torn and more than half-eaten away with mildew—mere bits of rags adhering to broken hafts.

One of them had once been a tricolor.

There were three scraps of red, white, and blue, still clinging to the worm-eaten pole, and on top was the one-time golden eagle of France.

Howard held it in his hand wonderingly.

It was a flag, such as this, that Grandfather had fought for so bravely, and would willingly have given up his life to save.

Just three scraps of colour and a golden eagle, why——

Then suddenly the boy's soliloquy stopped, as his eyes caught sight of some words roughly cut on the handle.

They were in English.

"Flag of the 10th Chasseurs,"
taken at Waterloo,
by
xxNxx

Evidently there had been a name of some sort originally attached, presumably that of the British soldier who had captured the flag, but the wood was grievously battered and worn, the above words alone being decipherable.

But to the shrewd little English school-boy their meaning was at once perfectly obvious.

This time-worn relic, which he held in his hand, was really Grandfather's "lost flag!"

In his wanderings, Uncle Herbert had picked it up somewhere, and now by a strange twist of Fate which oftentimes evinces more method than we nineteenth century scepties are willing to conceive, it had come back to the man whose life had been one long wait, for that which he had lost.

"The lost flag of the 10th Chasseurs!"

Madame Villette was quite right, after all. She had said Grandfather would never rest till the flag had been found again.

And now that it had been found, he must have it, at once.

Thrilling with excitement the boy hurried back to the white bedroom.

Except for the drowsy ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece, the room was quite still.

Madame Villette, tired of saying her rosary, had fallen asleep.

The form on the bed lay immovable, but the wrinkled eyelids moved slightly on the boy's entrance.

"The flag! The flag!" came the whistling moan, once more, through the parchment-like lips.

"Here, M'sieu," said the English boy, softly, as he stepped forward. "Here!" and he laid it on the bed.

Then Howard saw what he had never seen before, the great black eyes of Grandfather, wide open.

For a moment they remained fixed on the battered flag, then the claw-like hand crept forward tremblingly, and grasped it.

The old man held it against his breast tightly for some moments, muttering:

"The flag, the flag—at last!"

His weird eyes frightened the boy, and the latter glanced round apprehensively in a vague desire for assistance.

But the streak of sunlight still lay on the floor, and Madame slept on peacefully.

With a long-drawn sigh of satisfaction Grandfather essayed to raise himself in the bed.

His great black eyes wandered round the room and fixed themselves for a moment on the boy, who shrank back in horror, then they wandered towards the window.

"There—there," he cried, quite clearly, "there is the Emperor, and—and the horses. See—see the swords glistening, and the horses prancing as they form up for the last charge. They only await the flag and—me. And now I am going—going. Hark! to the galloping hoofs. Ah! my comrades the Chasseurs, I join you—I join you—*Vive—Vive—l'Empereur!*"

* * * * *

The slant of sunlight still lay on the floor, as Madame Villette awoke, mumbling drowsily.

Jeanette was placing a big wooden crucifix between two lighted candles that stood by the bedside. Over by the door-way the little English boy stood, crying softly.

But Grandfather had joined the Emperor.

NOLAN OF CASTLENOCK.

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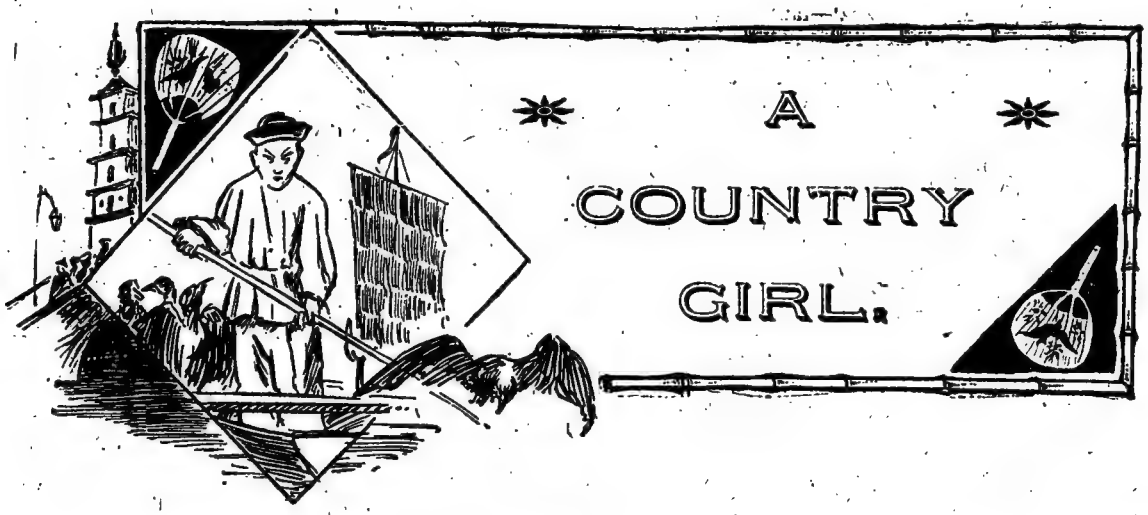

"I *must* go now, dear. Dear old dad will be tired of waiting for me in the trap—but I feel that I *can't* leave you."

It was a simple leave-taking between boy and girl lovers; it might have made a superficial observer smile, but it was intensely real to those two.

She had waited for him in the little flower garden at the back of the house—the little garden in which they had played as children and had plighted their troth; he had walked straight through the house to the spot where he knew he would find her, and, standing by the rustic seat, tightly clasped in a fond embrace, they had tried to say good-bye.

All the words of comfort, encouragement and anticipation of future happiness which each one had been trying to utter, failed completely, and they could only stand together, silent and vaguely trying to keep back the tears which would come to their eyes and obscure the last look of the loved one.

Good-bye! The hateful word would not come; it was replaced by a kiss, a long, passionate kiss, and then Bert left her and ran through the house without saying farewell to her mother, and half groped his way into the trap which was to take him to the station, whence he would journey to the far-off city. And Jenny sank on the seat in the garden and wept as if her heart would break.

Herbert Jordan and Jenny Bruce had loved each other almost from babyhood; as children they had been almost inseparable, and the neighbours had jestingly called them man and wife so often that it had come to be commonly understood that they were destined for each other. Herbert was always Jenny's champion, and it was quite natural that, as they approached maturity, the stronger passion should take the place of childish affection.

There was no doubt that the two young people loved with the whole force of their being; the prospective union had not been pleasing to Herbert's father, but he recognised the depth of this love and had yielded to what he considered the inevitable.

Bert had surprised and gratified his father by developing a taste for study. In that little out-of-the-way village, six miles from a railway station, isolated by bad roads and so much apart from the outer world that it seemed to be forgotten, it was difficult to progress beyond the education of the village school; but the carpenter enlisted the services of the school-master on behalf of his son, and, as the boy was one of the few who can learn from books quite as well as from a master, books were obtained for him.

The boy showed a liking for such subjects as might come under the head of "doctoring," and when Mr. Jordan discovered this, he determined to scrape every penny in order that his son might become a member of the medical profession.

The idea pleased the boy himself; he pictured the time when he would establish himself as a doctor, in a neighbouring village—it must be a neighbouring village for his native place was so inaccessible—and Jenny would be "the doctor's wife." How delighted the young people were at the thought.

Jenny was just as enthusiastic as Bert himself, and listened to his plans and to his long talks on the subjects of his studies with as much pleasure as if she understood all about them, instead of not being able to comprehend more than a mere fragment here and there.

And when she was "the doctor's wife" she would help him—oh! how she would help him! She did not exactly know in what way she could be of service, but that was a detail which she did not stop to consider.

Her mother should give up the little shop which she had kept on since the father's death, and Mr. Jordan would give up his small carpenter's business and "dealing," and they would all live together in "the doctor's house."

And now Bert had gone away to be coached for the Arts examination, which he was sure to pass; and then he would enter as a medical student and in five years he would be a qualified practitioner!

He would have to live very quietly and study hard, for his father could only send him just enough money to keep him going. It was rather rough on dad, but it would all be paid back when Herbert came home with M.R.C.S. or L.R.C.P., or both, at the end of his name.

* * * * *

Bertie Jordan sat in his modest den with his forehead puckered into a decided frown. On the table in front of

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him lay an open letter at which he had been staring for several minutes.

Four and a half years had passed since he had left home, and all had gone well with his plans. He was beginning his fifth year as a medical student, and as a result of capability and hard work, he had earned a reputation among his fellow students and his teachers, who regarded him as a man who would "do something" in the future.

He had not been home during the whole of that time; the return journey cost a fair amount, and the plain truth was that he could not afford it.

He had regularly received the stated allowance from his father, but that was all too small for a medical student. Had he not been lucky enough to do a good turn to a fellow student, he might have been forced to give up, as a poor medical student does not have a very pleasant time. But it certainly had been a lucky day for him when he fished Harry Baynes out of the river; the Baynes were well-to-do and Bert Jordan had been introduced into circles which he had at one time regarded as unattainable.

Harry always insisted upon paying when they were out together, and this enabled Bert to make a better appearance than he could otherwise have done.

The letter in front of him vexed him; he felt angry, yet—Why did she write to him like that? If she had the much-lauded woman's wit she would have guessed; Gracie Baynes and the other girls he met so often would certainly have guessed and would have not found it necessary to write and ask. Could Jenny not understand that things were different now, without forcing him to tell her so?

He took up the letter and read one paragraph again, although he knew it by heart.

"Bertie dear, why do you not write more often? Your letters have been longer and longer between, and it is now three months, *three months*, since I had a word from you. I look for a letter every morning, and every day I am disappointed. Letters seem to come for everybody but me. Then I thought that you were waiting for my birthday, but yesterday went by and there was no letter, and this morning again there is none. Bertie dear, are you ill? *Do* write and tell me."

There were traces of tears on the paper, and the writing was less firm than usual. Bertie shifted uneasily on his chair and became more angry.

"Any sensible girl would understand what was meant when a fellow didn't write, but Jenny is so simple, so——" He was about to say "so loving and trustful," but he crushed the words back.

For a brief space his mind went back to the old home, to the flower garden, the rustic seat and the leave-taking. He thought of the faithful friend of his childhood and early youth, the sweetheart of later days who had encouraged him and urged him on—the gentle, loving girl, so good. Good! Yes, that simple word summed up her whole character.

The look of vexation, which had disappeared for a moment, came back to Jordan's face in an intensified form. He strode about the room with his hands in his pockets and his head bent,

"That's all very well," he muttered savagely, "but things are different. We are not in the least fitted for each other now, and she ought to be able to see that. How on earth can she expect me to give up the chance of marrying Grace or one of the other girls, when marriage with any one of them would make me for life? She doesn't know anything about it, I admit, but as I have said, she ought to guess."

He went back to his table, unlocked a drawer and took a photo from it. It was a picture of Jenny, sent by her twelve months previously.

It was not a pretty face, and the style of dress and the mode of doing up the hair were decidedly "countrified," but it would not have been difficult to picture the original as a healthy, lovable woman who would give her life in the service of the man she loved. Even in the inanimate photograph there was something about the face which proved how devoted the woman would be. The sight of the photograph occasioned a momentary struggle within the man who was gazing at it.

"She is a dear little girl and would make a sweet wife. The portrait doesn't show you the tender expression in those soft eyes; it doesn't convey any notion of the kiss those lips can give or the way that girl can make you sit up and feel ashamed of yourself with just an expression when you have done anything not quite in order, or how she can stiffen you when your courage is drooping and make you feel that you could get through any difficulty."

He held the photograph at arms length, and between it and his eyes there came the vision of "the girls" he met at the parties given by the Baynes.

"Yes, it's the plain truth; she's gawkish. There's no getting away from it. We are not in the least fitted for one another now; she would be just out of it as my wife and would be as unhappy as she once thought she would be happy. She isn't a patch on any of the others, and I mustn't allow sentiment to interfere. We thought we were fond of each other, but that was only boy and girl love. People soon get over that sort of thing; *I* have, and so will she—if she hasn't already. She is lonely in that shop now her mother is dead, and that's what makes her look for a letter; it isn't love. Yes that's it. She ought to marry and have a man to look after the little business. I'll write to-night and explain it to her. Let me see. This is Thursday evening, so she won't get the letter till Saturday morning; but I'll write at once and get it over."

"It's all right!" he heard a voice say downstairs. "I know the way and it's only me!"

It was the voice of Harry Baynes and he was evidently mounting the stairs two and three at a time. Bert seized the letter and crumpled the missive and photograph into his left hand and crammed them into his pocket just as his friend made an unceremonious entry.

Young Baynes only stayed about three minutes, merely long enough to make an arrangement for the following evening. After his departure Bert sat down resolutely at his table and wrote the letter.

Saturday morning was usually a busy time at the little shop of which Jenny Bruce was now proprietress, and several customers were surprised that Jenny was not to be seen. After knocking on the counter three or four times, each one went away with the intention of calling again later. And while they were thus waiting for Jenny, she was lying unconscious near the little rustic seat in the garden, her right hand tightly clutching a letter—a letter which which had caused her the greatest joy when it was handed to her, for the address was in a handwriting which she had longed for three months to see.

* * * * *

It was a lovely afternoon, eighteen months later, when Herbert Jordan alighted from the train at the little country railway station and set out on a six-mile walk to

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his native village. He preferred to walk, and for the same reason—that his home coming should be as little observed as possible—he had not told his father by which train he should come.

Everything looked much the same as it had six years before; there had been very little change here, but what an alteration had taken place in his own life! He had passed his examinations with honours, he was about to fill the position of assistant to a medical gentleman of repute—thanks to the good offices of his friend and the elder Mr. Baynes—and it was tacitly understood that he was to marry Grace Baynes in due course, although the formal engagement had not been announced.

His father was taking tea when Bert entered, and the greeting between father and son was hearty and affecting. Old Jordan made his boy sit down without ado at the table to partake of refreshments.

"I had two cups and saucers, and plates set o' purpose, boy," said the old man, as he dumped two thick slices of bread and butter on the plate and swashed some tea into the cup. "There! You ain't had a tea like that since ye left home, I'll warrant! They don't give you good stuff like that in towns and cities, I know. Now you just go on with your tea, and you can tell me all about yourself while you're eating and drinking."

Herbert laughed heartily, and did as his father wished; he was hungry and thirsty, and able to dispose of the good stuff without difficulty.

By the time they had finished the meal, Herbert had given his father an outline of what he had done and what he proposed and hoped to do.

"Did ye see any of the people as ye came along?" asked Mr. Jordan after a pause.

His manner indicated that he wished to lead up to some subject and Herbert guessed what it was.

"I saw three of our people, dad," he answered, "but I fancy they did not recognise me. How is Jenny Bruce?" he asked, boldly.

Old Jordan started; he had reached the desired subject more quickly than he had expected.

"She's mortal bad," he returned with a shake of the head and dropping his eyes. "The work of that shop is a great deal too hard for her. She began to droop like, a matter o' two years or so ago, and after a few months she drooped still more. Fretting and the hard work have done it, I think."

"Is she very ill?"

"Yes, my boy, she is," said the old man solemnly. "The doctor told me this morning she wouldn't live only a few hours."

"I knew the work was too hard for her," said Herbert uneasily. "She ought to have married one of these young fellows, and I told her so."

"Yes, my boy," half muttered Jordan. "I know you did. She showed me your letter. She didn't want to, but I guessed as something had gone wrong and I managed to make her let me have sight of it. Bertie, you made a mistake!"

"What do you mean, dad?" demanded Herbert, much disturbed by his father's tone. There was something between his father and Jenny which he could not understand. "Phew! It's stifling here, come to the door."

"I'll ask ye to excuse me, Bertie. My leg is rather bad to-day."

"Your leg? What is the matter with it?"

"I had an accident nigh on three years ago, my boy, and I ain't been much good since. Only just been able to tiffle about just enough to keep myself going. I—oh!" Jordan stopped short, as if he had said more than he intended.

"Accident! Only been able to earn enough to keep yourself!" Herbert's face grew livid as he spoke; he stared at his father for a few seconds, but the old man kept his eyes on the ground, while his cheeks flushed. "Father!" gasped Herbert in a hoarse voice. "How did you get the money that you sent me—the money that has enabled me to reach my present position? You never said anything to me! Where did it come from if you could not earn it?"

"Jenny gave it to me!"

Herbert reeled and sank into the chair opposite to his father's.

"She wouldn't let me tell you; and even when you threw her over, she kept on giving it me, so as you might have your wish. She said that when a woman loved a man as she loved you, she loved him always and would give her very life to help him. Oh! Bertie, I think she has done it! She might have given up the shop and earned her own living easily, but she braved all the hard work—for you!"

The two watchers by the side of the dying woman raised their hands warningly as a man pushed open the door and entered the room.

The noise was but slight, yet Jenny heard it and turned her eyes in that direction. Immediately a joyous expression came into them, a smile appeared on her lips and she half raised her hands in welcome; then the thin arms dropped helplessly, but the joyful expression remained in the eyes and the smile still hovered on her lips.

The rays of the setting sun fell on a motionless figure on the bed and on the weeping man kneeling by the bedside, while the two watchers looked on stolidly at a scene whose inner meaning was hidden from them.

GEO. DAY.

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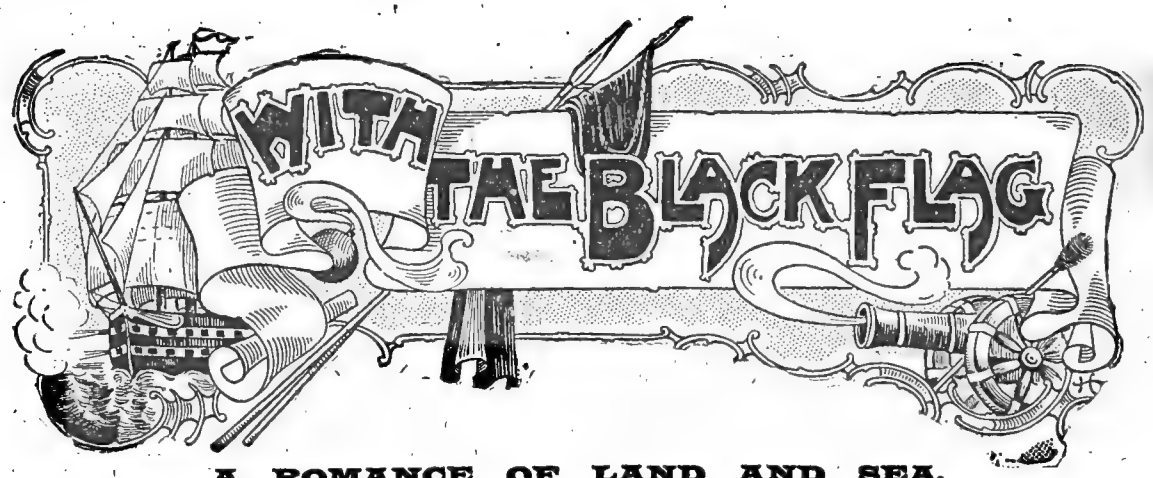

A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

By William Westall.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

SUMMARY.

Major Wyvenhoe leaves England on the *Campanella* with a detachment of troops, raised by Major Barnish, to help the Venezuelans in their struggle for liberty. Major Barnish is accompanied on the vessel by his wife. At Cork a detachment of Irishmen is taken on board together with General Molyneux, who is connected with the Venezuelan Army, his secretary and chaplain. When the vessel has been out a few days Major Barnish meets with a fatal accident, and on that same day a mutiny breaks out among the troops, but it is speedily quelled.

Shortly after this Venezuela is reached, and as Captain Cautley does not know the coast well a pilot has to be obtained, and it is found that Conroy, one of the chief mutineers, is able to act as such, and the course of the ship is intrusted to him.

Just before reaching Pampatar the *Santa Marta*, a Spanish sloop, is captured after a sharp skirmish, and put in the charge of a prize crew. On arrival at Pampatar Major Wyvenhoe and Captain Cautley are received by the Governor, General Arismendez, and his second in command, General Urdenetta. A banquet takes place in the evening, at which all the British officers are present, and when they return to the *Campanella* they find that the *Santa Marta*, which was anchored close by, has gone.

CHAPTER VII.

Arismendez' Story.

We spent a long time and a great deal of energy in cruising where the sloop had been in the hope of discovering where she was, as well as making excursions in various directions on the off chance of her having, for some inscrutable reason, shifted her anchorage. Then realising that it was all in vain, that she was gone beyond recovery, we returned sobered and disconsolate, to the *Campanella*.

Cautley raged like a whirlwind.

"This comes of humanity, of sparing life, and doing people a good turn," he exclaimed bitterly. "I gave them the boats and they have taken the ship, after mastering the crew and, I have no doubt, cutting all their throats. Fifteen good men and true gone to their last account, and all my fault. Did anybody ever hear of treachery so base? The poor fellows, knowing that I had given the Spaniards leave to go would be off their guard; most of them, I daresay, were below, and half the anchor watch asleep. They would be easily surprised. And yet Don Tadeo spoke of his gratitude, and protested that if opportunity offered, he would behave to us as we behaved to him. I know one thing; if ever I have the chance, I shall behave to him as he has behaved to me, and the next time I hear of a Spaniard talk about gratitude, I shall know that he means treachery. We should have sent half a company of your soldiers to stand by until the Spaniards were out of the ship. My mind misgave me when the governor insisted on us all going to the banquet. It was not wise to leave the brig in sole charge of the boatswain, and the sloop in sole charge of a quartermaster. It is worse than if we had never taken her; instead of gaining distinction we have made ourselves a laughing stock. And what will General Arismendez say?"

I sympathised with the skipper in his anger against Don Tadeo, since though it is quite legitimate for prisoners to retake a captured ship if they can, no man of honour would have taken advantage of such an opportunity as we had foolishly placed at his disposal. But this fact did not acquit us of blame, and Cautley, as being more especially responsible for the sloop's safety, felt the humiliation more keenly than anybody else, and I was very sorry for him.

When we went on board the *Campanella* he told the astonished boatswain what had happened, and rated him roundly for his carelessness in not missing the ship.

"When did her lights go out?" he asked him.

The boatswain could not tell, and on further inquiry it turned out that he had been too much occupied otherwise to take notice of the *Santa Marta*.

While the officers had been feasting ashore, the men had been drinking on board, and got quite beyond the poor fellow's control. When he remonstrated they laughed, and when he knocked one or two of them down the others threatened to throw him overboard, and altogether he had a very rough time.

The skipper wanted to know where the men got their drink.

"From a shore boat that came alongside and sold them as much rum as they liked, which was a good deal," answered the boatswain.

"When was that?"

"About an hour after you left and a bit before Conroy went away—in another boat."

"Where did he go?"

"He said he was going ashore."

"And has he returned?"

"No, sir."

The skipper and I exchanged glances.

"I know what you are thinking," he said, taking me aside. "You are thinking, as I think, that Conroy is the prime mover in this affair. He is much more likely to have conceived and carried it out than that stupid, stuck-up Don.

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My fault again. I made an enemy of him and he wanted his revenge."

"Don't be absurd, my dear fellow," quoth I. "Revenge may have been one of Conroy's motives, but you may be sure that he has joined the Spaniards in order to better himself, and would have done so even if you had given him a berth. When he heard that we were gone and that the Spaniards were going he saw his opportunity, went straight to the Don, offered his services, made his proposals, and no doubt stipulated for a handsome reward."

"Very likely for a command. Well, if we meet let him look out, that is all," said the skipper savagely. "My goodness, when I think of Don Tadeo's treachery and those poor fellows slaughtered like sheep I feel as if I could hang every Spaniard I meet. And there is no chance of overhauling them, was not from the first. The run is only twenty miles, and as the sloop sails well and the wind is fair half-an-hour's start was all they needed. They had two or three hours, and by this time are probably under the guns of Fort Arroya. It is a grievous disappointment and humiliation, and I shall never forgive myself, but there is no use crying over spilt milk. Let us say no more about it, only you will have to tell Arismendez. I cannot, my Spanish is not good enough."

Which was quite true and a very good reason for making his report through an interpreter, but not for imposing a disagreeable duty on me, as I told him, proposing at the same time that we should see the Governor together. To this Cautley agreed, though with evident reluctance, for though never backward to blame himself he could not bear to be blamed by anybody else.

So early next morning we went to Government House and informed General Arismendez of the sloop's escape and the way in which, as we thought, it had been effected. He neither found fault nor seemed surprised, though he smiled one of his grimmest smiles.

"You don't know the Spaniards as I know them," he said. "If you had told me what you were about I should have put you on your guard. Of course they have killed all your men. They are cruel by nature and return evil for good on principle. I am sorry the ship is lost, she would have been very useful, but as she has not been formally taken into our navy there will be no need for an inquiry. Misfortunes will happen sometimes, only I hope you won't give quarter any more. If you had either killed Don Tadeo and his men, or let me deal with them, you would have had nothing to reproach yourselves with."

"I beg your pardon, Señor General, but as we promised them their lives we should have had a great deal to reproach ourselves with," I returned. "I am sorry the sloop is lost, but we would rather lose ten sloops, Captain Cautley and I, and our lives, to boot, than break our pledged word."

"You are men of honour, and keep your word. I am a man of honour and have sworn that every Spaniard who falls into my hands shall die. That vow has been kept; even when the life of one dearer to me than my own was at stake I refused to break it. I am half Indian in blood and South American born. Think of the hundreds of thousands of my ancestors whom in past times they reduced to slavery and put to death. But it is not for their forefathers' sins that I give them no quarter, it is for what they have done since this war began, for what they are doing now. From the first they refused to exchange prisoners, and slaughtered with indiscriminate ferocity not only male non-combatants but women and children. See!"

General Arismendez took from his cabinet a newspaper and a letter.

"Read this passage," he said. "It occurs in a dispatch from a royalist general to the King, and is of frequent occurrence, with slight variations, in royalist dispatches."

The passage ran thus:

"The pueblo (village) of Pillar, with all its inhabitants, has disappeared from the face of the earth."

"This letter," continued the general, "was intercepted by Captain Chitty, a countryman of yours, who holds a command in our navy. As you see, it is addressed to King Ferdinand by General Morillo, and tells of the taking of Santa-Fé-de-Bogota. I would call your particular attention to this paragraph: 'Every person of either sex who could read and write was put to death. By thus cutting off all who were in any way educated I hoped to suppress the spirit of revolution.'

"And the massacres were carried out with every refinement of cruelty, some of the victims were shot, others hanged, husbands were put to death in the presence of their wives, wives in the presence of their husbands, young girls and boys, even little children, in the presence of their parents. Many of the gibbets on which the bodies were chained together in clusters are still standing and if you go to Santa Fé you may see them. It was then that we proclaimed *guerra a la muerta* (war to the death) and adopted the black flag as its emblem, under which we have since fought and under which you will fight."

"It means no quarter?"

"Yes, that which our enemies refuse to us, we refuse to them. And I think, Major Wyvenhoe, you will admit that

General Arismendez took from his cabinet a newspaper and a letter.

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we cannot, if we would, do otherwise, and that we are fully justified by the laws of war. The republic is poor, we have not the means of maintaining all the prisoners who come into our hands, and to release them would be equivalent to recruiting for our enemies. Besides, was it not returning good for evil?"

This, as a general proposition was undeniable, and I had no difficulty in agreeing with it, but being unable to

"Why won't you let me kill him, father?" demanded Ramon passionately.

approve of reprisal, yet not caring to argue the question with my superior officer and my host I evaded it by inquiring whether his remark that he had kept his vow, even when the life of one dearer to him than his own was at stake, had been suggested by some recent incident.

"Well, it occurred two years ago, if you call that recent,' and if you would like to hear and will give me your attention a few minutes I will tell you the story."

On which I thanked the general for his courtesy and said that Cautley and myself would very much like to hear the story.

"Good! You shall hear it. But first of all I must tell you that two years ago General Morillo landed here with 17,000 of the best troops of Spain, not a Creole amongst them, fortified the heights of Pampatar and prepared to attack Juan Griego, the possession of which would make him master of Margarita. But the only way thither, over the otherwise impassable mountains which stretch right across the island, is a rough road, made by the natives, which at its highest point runs through a gorge and crosses a torrent by a draw-bridge so narrow that it can be traversed only in single file.

"At the time of the invasion we had no organised force and only three hundred muskets. But we seized the bridge and withstood every attempt made by Morillo to dislodge us. Again and again we drove the invaders back with heavy loss. We got arms from the Main, recruits came in almost daily, and after a while I was able to take the offensive.

"Meanwhile, Morillo avenged his failures by wholesale slaughter. Everybody suspected of sympathising with the patriots was put to death, their bodies gibbeted, or their severed limbs impaled on stakes and nailed on trees.

"The officer most conspicuous in this work was Colonel Gomez, of General Morillo's staff, and I swore that he should not leave the island alive.

"But instead of helping the Spaniards these horrors kindled so fierce a spirit of resistance that we were joined by nearly every man in the island. Even women, maddened by the cruel deaths of those dear to them, fought in our ranks, and were often our keenest and most trustworthy scouts.

"Morillo's army melted away. Hardly a day passed on which we did not surprise and destroy an escort, a picket, or a detachment. There are only a few places in the island where cavalry can be used or infantry deployed, places which, of course, we avoided. And the European troops proved much less formidable than you might think. They were not acclimatised, they died of dysentery and black vomit, they lost their way and got entangled among the prickly-pear trees, we let them have no rest by day, and the zancudos and other insect pests let them have no rest by night, and so, little by little, we got the upper hand.

"And then, when all seemed to be going on well, I had a great misfortune. My wife, while bathing in a secluded pool, was surprised and carried off by Spaniards. When I heard of it I was wild with grief and rage, and took immediate measures either to rescue her, if she were still alive, or avenge her if she had been put to death, as I feared was only too likely.

"Calling as many of my men together as were in the neighbourhood I followed up the Spaniards and attacked their rearguard, without, however, rescuing my wife, who had been taken to General Morillo's headquarters. But we took nearly two hundred prisoners, and, greatest prize of all, Colonel Gomez.

"All but him had been disposed of when a boy prisoner—flags of truce were respected on neither side—brought a letter from General Morillo offering to exchange my wife for the Colonel, to which I replied that dear to me as was my wife my country was still dearer, and that before the bearer of my answer set out on his return the monster whose hands had been so often imbued in innocent blood would be dead. Then, in presence of the messenger, my son Ramon, with a single stroke of his *machete*, severed the Colonel's head from his body.

"'Now go and tell General Morillo what you have seen,' I told the messenger, and he went."

"And what became of poor Señora Arismendez?" I asked.

"On receiving my message Morillo gave orders for her to be put to death, but when she was brought out for execution some of his officers, moved by her tears and her condition, for she was in delicate health, interceded for her, and she was sent to Cadiz and there imprisoned; but, after a few days detention, she escaped by the connivance of friends, and, disguised as a seaman, took passage in a merchant ship bound for the West Indies, which somewhere about the Azores was captured by a Venezuelan privateer. When her captain knew whom he had rescued he made for Margarita, and not long afterwards landed Señora Arismendez at Pampatar, to my unspeakable surprise and joy."

"A strange story yet true," observed General Urdenetta, who, together with another caballero much younger than himself, had entered the room while the Governor was telling his tale. "You will admire our friend's iron resolution and inflexible patriotism as greatly as I do, though I

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shall never be able to emulate his example. If I had to choose between killing a Spaniard and losing my wife I am afraid I should be weak enough to prefer my wife."

This was said more lightly and with a pleasant smile, yet to me it seemed more like a sneer than a compliment. But Arismendez pretended to take it as a compliment, saying that he felt sure that the Señor General would act as he had acted, and was as devoted to their common country as himself, and then introduced the young subaltern as his son Ramon, with whom we shook hands, though it went against the grain.

"It was you who killed Colonel Gomez?" I asked.

"I had that honour, señor," he answered proudly.

"Captain Ramon is one of our most promising young officers and a brilliant swordsman," put in Urdeneta with his courtly smile. "I suppose he has made more Spaniards shorter by the head than any other man in Margarita. *Hasta ahora, señores,* (until we meet again, gentlemen.)" And after making a bow which included us all the general went his way.

"Why won't you let me kill him, father?" demanded Ramon passionately.

"Kill Urdenetta! Why, I should like to know?"

"Why? Don't you see that he is laughing at us? I cannot abide his smooth tongue and treacherous smile. He is as false as Satan and will do us an ill turn if he can."

"I should be sorry to think so, Ramon, and it would be going rather far to kill a man because you don't like his smile. There may be many people who don't like your smile, or mine. Kill as many Spaniards as you like, but I will have no killing of patriots. Moreover, raising your hand against your general would be mutiny, and (sternly) you know how I punish mutineers."

On this the young fellow rose from his chair and saluted, and then, muttering what sounded like a fierce imprecation, quitted the room.

"Ramon is a brave soldier and a devoted patriot, but rather hot-tempered as you see, and he does not like Urdenetta. Neither, to tell the truth, do I; but for various reasons it would be impolitic to quarrel with him," observed the Governor, and then, after arranging for disembarking the troops, we took our leave.

"I don't know what your opinion may be, but it strikes me that we have got into very queer company," quoth Cautley, when we were outside. "Are they all ruffians, do you think?"

"Gad, it almost seems so and a good match for the Spaniards; but we have been too short a time in the country to pass judgment."

"True, and, do you know, I rather like Arismendez, though he did have that colonel's head chopped off instead of exchanging him for his wife. There is no nonsense about the old fellow; he is straightforward, and according to his lights a man of honour. Anyhow, he is a better sort than Urdenetta."

"I quite agree with you. Unless I am greatly mistaken, Urdenetta is a sneak, and I daresay quite as cruel as the Governor; and it is hardly fair to judge these people by European standards. What can you expect from half-educated men like Arismendez—Spanish with a touch of the tar-brush on one side and of Indian on the other—brutalised by Spanish rule, and provoked to ferocious reprisals by wholesale slaughter. For that the royalists refuse quarter to the patriots there can be no question. Don Tadeo admitted it, and then that letter and those dispatches, I am sure they are genuine. They square with what we heard before we started, though I could not believe it, and there was a good deal in Arismendez' remark that war is not returning good for evil."

"For all that, two wrongs don't make one right, and I know of nothing more wrong than killing in cold blood men whose only offence is doing their duty, and who plead for mercy."

"Oh, I am not going to defend the practice, only before we condemn people we should try to put ourselves in their place. I don't know how it feels to be a Venezuelan rebel, but I am afraid that if the French were to invade England, give no quarter and slaughter women and children, such of them as fell into our hands would not receive mercy."

"I am sure they would not, and quite right, too," returned the skipper with amusing inconsistency, but his heart was ever sounder that his logic. "All the same I shall neither refuse quarter nor kill nor order prisoners to be killed, let the consequences be what they may."

"Neither shall I, rather will I resign my commission, or, if it should come to that, lose my life."

"But it cannot come to that."

"I am not so sure. Suppose that I, being ordered to take command of a firing party and shoot a batch of prisoners, were to refuse, as I certainly should, what would happen? These 'patriots' don't seem to stand on much ceremony and I doubt whether they have more than one punishment either for mutiny or disobedience. You heard the Governor threaten his son with death if he meddled with Urdenetta. At any rate I did."

"Hadn't we better throw it up then? Though I should be very sorry, for I think we are in for a stirring time, hard knocks and lots of prize-money."

Miss Sidonia sat with me under the verandah.

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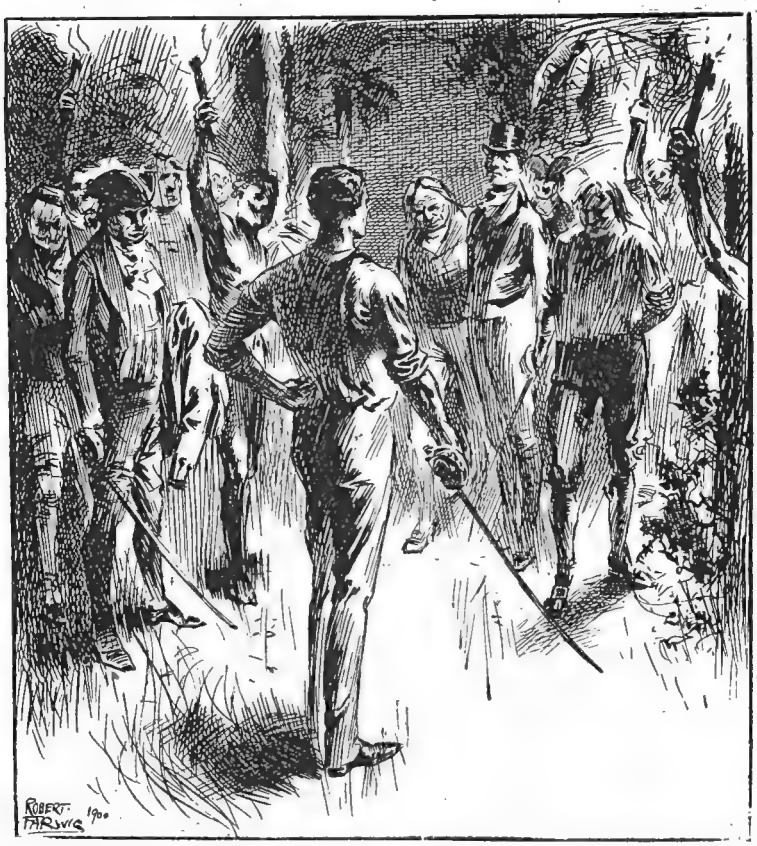
"It is too soon to talk about throwing it up. I must see more of the country and the people, and something of the war, before I do anything of that sort. It will be time enough to act when the occasion arises, I daresay we shall pull



The fight was just beginning when General Arismendez broke into the ring.

through, and if we don't, there will be an end, and nobody can live for ever. Were soldiering free from hazard it would be as tame as rabbit shooting."

"All the same, I mean to live as long as I can," said Cautley laughing. "But it is time we went aboard. Everything is ready for landing the troops, and the sooner they are ashore the better I shall be pleased. Rations are getting scarce and the ship needs a thorough overhauling. What sort of quarters are these people giving you?"

"Poor, but as they are the best they have we must e'en be content."

While the men were being landed I made several trips between the ship and the shore, and as the last batch was being dispatched and the skipper and I were pacing the quarter-deck, we espied a small, single-masted boat coming from the south and, as might seem, making for Pampatar.

"What sort of a craft is that?" I asked him.

"A launch as sure as I am a sinner," he exclaimed after inspecting her through his glass. "A launch on the larboard tack. Now they are putting her on the starboard tack, coming this way beyond a doubt. What the dickens can it mean?"

"It means that they have business in Margarita, I suppose."

"Bah! Don't I tell you she is a launch?"

"You did, though I fail to see what difference it makes, a boat's a boat for all that."

"And a launch is a man-of-war's boat, and if that launch has not belonged or does not belong to a Spanish man-of-war, I never saw one."

"But the Spaniards would not dare——"

"To try to cut us out you mean. Of course they would not; anyhow with one boat. But what can those fellows be after, they come on as though they had nothing to fear, and there's a lot of them. I shall be able to count them in a minute and perhaps make out what they are. One, two, three, four—fifteen, and not a Spaniard amongst them. I do believe—yes, they are our own men, the poor fellows we thought we should never see again. Hurrah!" shouted the captain, waving his hat.

The cheer was repeated by all who were within hearing, taken up by the crew and answered by the men in the launch.

"Hurrah!" cried Cautley again. "I was never better pleased in my life. All there, and seemingly not much the worse. But how the dickens did they manage it I wonder! Getting away in the sloop's launch in broad daylight, I never knew the like."

A few minutes later the mystery was solved, the launch ran under our quarter, lowered her sail and made fast, and the next moment the men were on deck. The crew, frantic with delight, nearly mobbed them, shaking their hands, patting them on the back, and plying them with questions innumerable. So soon as order was restored, which took a little time, the quartermaster made his report.

It was as we had thought; the prize crew had been surprised and overpowered. Shortly after sunset Conroy came on board and had a long talk with Don Tadeo, and about nine o'clock the Spaniards began their preparations for departure, and, as might appear, were going to lower the boats when the attack was made and the Englishmen being all over the ship, unarmed, outnumbered, and taken unawares, were made prisoners to a man, fast bound and put below wondering why the Spaniards had not killed them out of hand, and expecting immediate death.

But nothing happened till dawn, when they had a visit from Don Tadeo and Conroy, who said they were free and might return to Pampatar in the sloop's launch, and that the captain spared their lives and restored them to liberty in consideration of the generosity with which Captain Cautley had treated the crew of the *Santa Marta* and himself.

"But this is quite an exception," added Conroy roughly, "and Don Tadeo desires me to say that if any of you are captured while fighting under the rebel flag you will be either scragged or shot without ceremony."

Then the Britishers, being freed from their bonds and going on deck, found the launch alongside and were soon under weigh for Margarita.

Before they left the ship Don Tadeo gave the quartermaster a letter which he charged him to deliver to Captain Cautley.

It ran as follows:

"SENOR CAPITAN,—We are quits; as you treated me so I treat you. Do me the favour to present my compliments to your friend, Major Wyvenhoe, and say that I have an account to settle with him for the insulting comparison which he made between loyal cabarellos and Creole scum—

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and that, opportunity offering, I shall expect the satisfaction which I am sure he will not refuse.

"TADEO MOROY FALCON."

"That sounds like a challenge, the don is spoiling for a fight," said Cautley laughing.

"Well if an opportunity offers he shall not be baulked. Anyhow, Don Tadeo is a gallant gentleman and has been as good as his word."

"I suppose so; all the same, I am not quite sure about our being quits," rejoined the skipper dubiously, "for though he has surrendered the men he keeps the ship."

"You took it and he stole away with it, so you are still quits."

"And very mean of him it was to steal away with it confound him. However, the fault was mine, I should not have given him the chance. Yes, Don Tadeo has behaved well, a jolly sight better than I expected. I shall begin to think that these Spaniards are not so bad as they are painted. Hello! Here is something on the other side," said Cautley, to whom I had returned the letter after translating it. "In English, too! Just listen to this:

"Mr. Captain Cautley,—Dear sir,—It would have been worth your while to give me a berth, more so than you think. I have gone over to the Spaniards. No more of your dirty English and Irish for me. Yours to command,

"GEORGE CONROY."

"Did you ever know the like? 'Dear sir,' indeed! Hang the fellow. 'No more of your dirty English and Irish for me.' What is he, a Scot?"

"No, he calls himself a Manxman. I expect the ruffian thinks that his having gone over to the Spaniards will strike terror into us all."

"At any rate, he gives us warning, which is very kind, though on his part foolish. 'More worth while than you think,' means more than meets the eye."

"That's his bounce. What can he do? However, I am not going to be caught napping again, and if you can let fifty or sixty of your men come on board every night and remain till daylight I shall be obliged. They need not always be the same men."

"Certainly, send boats to the jetty every evening at sunset and the men shall be there."

Several days passed, occupied chiefly in drills, inspections and parades, also the contingent was formally mustered into the service of the Venezuelan Republic, but as to what we were to do or whither go I could not obtain information. General Arismendez was waiting for orders from the Government, which meant Don Simon Bolivar, the Supreme Chief, as he styled himself and liked to be called. This was tiresome, for Margarita is so dreary a place that a little of it goes a long way. The *Campanella* still rode at her anchor, greatly to the skipper's annoyance, who, like the rest of us, wanted to be actively employed.

Hence we heard with great satisfaction that the governor and his lady proposed to give a ball in our honour, since, though dancing is not campaigning, it is active employment and good fun, and in South America, as we presently discovered, may be very exciting and end in a fight.

The guests were numerous but rather mixed, and in all shades, from white to black and from saffron to sallow, and as uniforms were *de rigueur* and the ladies delighted in bright colours, the scene, albeit a little peculiar, was bright and picturesque.

Señora Arismendez, a fine handsome woman, her husband's second wife, made a capital hostess, and she and her husband introduced us to nearly every girl in the room, among others to the belle of the ball, Señorita Sidonia, a young lady of almost pure Spanish blood, with large Arab-like eyes, an oval face, and a delicate olive-tinted complexion. She was moreover tall and shapely, as graceful as a fawn, a beautiful dancer, a sprightly partner and an arrant coquette.

Ramon Arismendez was looking on when his stepmother introduced us, and I gathered from the scowl that gathered on his bull fighter's face that he was one of the señorita's victims, and regarded me as a possible rival. But Miss Sidonia only nodded to him, and laughing mischievously gave me all the dances I asked for and between whiles promenaded with me round the ball room, or sat smoking with me under the verandah. She even gave me a little cigar which she had already pressed between her coral lips, the greatest compliment a señorita can pay to a caballero.

If her intention was to provoke young Arismendez, she succeeded to admiration. I never looked at him that he did not threaten me with his eyes, and once when we met he laid his hand on my arm and in a fierce whisper said:

"If you don't discontinue your attentions to the Señorita Sidonia I will treat you as I treated Colonel Gomez."

"Not unless I am bound and unarmed, as he was. Butchering a helpless man is no proof either of courage or address," I answered and passed on, leaving Don Ramon speechless with rage.

Five minutes afterwards I was again dancing with Señorita Sidonia.

At three o'clock the ball was nearly over, most of the guests were gone and the skipper and myself were on the point of departure, when a young fellow in uniform touched me on the shoulder and said that he had come on behalf of Señor Capitan Arismendez to demand satisfaction for the insulting observation which I no doubt remembered having made to him.

"Certainly," I replied, "when and where?"

"Here—behind the house—and now."

"Good, please lead on. Come along Cautley, I am in for a duel and you will have to act as my second. I will explain afterwards."

The young fellow conducted me to a palm grove about a hundred yards from the house where we found at least a dozen men, presumably friends of Don Ramon, and nearly as many half naked negroes holding aloft blazing torches.

No time was wasted on preliminaries. Nothing had been said about weapons, but as it seemed to be taken for granted that we were to fight with swords I made no objection, for though I did not consider myself a brilliant swordsman I could fence passably well, quite as well as I could shoot.

Ramon's second measured two sabres, of which he gave me my choice. After doffing my coat and waistcoat I took one at random and my adversary and I stepped into the ring, which had been formed by the torch bearers and spectators, all of whom were in gala attire.

We crossed swords, and the fight was just beginning when loud exclamations were heard and General Arismendez, pushing aside all who stood in his way, broke into the ring.

"What is this?" he demanded angrily. "A duel here and now. Major Wyvenhoe, Ramon, I am astonished. If you want to kill anybody, kill Spaniards, not each other. Who is the challenger? What is the cause of dispute? A woman, of course."

"I am the challenger; Major Wyvenhoe—" began Ramon and there ended, the remainder of his explanation, if he made it, being drowned in the roar of three cannon shots from Fort Ciudad, fired almost simultaneously.

"Alarm guns! The Spaniards are upon us," exclaimed the general. "Major Wyvenhoe, assemble your men. Ramon, Garcia, Sapvador, to your posts, rouse the people and prepare to resist the invaders to the death!"

(To be continued.)

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT COWS AND BULLS.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "My Dear Sir," by Harry B. Vogel, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. Frank Ward, 95 Beechwood Road, Hillsborough, Sheffield. Attempts for this week's prize must deal with STORIES ABOUT THE SEASIDE, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, August 13th. Post-cards only, please.

Evident.

SOME time ago some cows were being taken by a cargo boat from Belfast to Liverpool. The passa e was a very stormy one, and at last the capta'n gave orders for all cows to be thrown overboard to lighten th ship, whose upper deck was flood d to su h an alarming extent that the animals were tossed about in all directions.

When the gale had somewhat subsided, the crew were puzzled at seeing some of the drovers hanging by their hands on the upper rails of the cattle boxes, keeping their feet clear of the deck, and apparently taking turns as each became exhausted and dropped.

Asking one of them why he was so engaged, he replied:

"Shure, can't yer see it's to lighten the ship?"

F. W.

The Bull Wouldn't Understand.

IN a certain town a farmer kept a large number of bulls, amongst them a mad one. Lord Blank was in the habit of crossing the field in which these bulls were kept, and one morning as he was walking across the field as usual he saw the mad bull running towards him.

The nobleman soon took to his heels, and just escaped being gored.

Much enraged, he went to the owner of the bull and demanded the meaning of the outrage. The farmer, not knowing the nobleman, told him, not over politely, that it was no fault of his.

The nobleman instantly said:

"You do not know who I am; I'm Lord Blank," to which the farmer replied:

"Well, go and tell the bull so," and shutting the door, he went in without another word. H. H. F.

The Cow was More Important.

A WOMAN went into an apothecary's shop the other day with two prescriptions, one for her husband and the other for her cow.

She inquired what was the price of them, and the apothecary replied it was so much for the man and so much for the cow.

The woman, finding she had not money enough, reflected for a moment, and said:

"At all events, give me the medicine for the cow; I can send for my husband's to-morrow."

E. P.

Tired of Being Polite.

A GENTLEMAN was one day coming out of a shop in Glasgow, and in crossing the road accidentally ran up against a cow which was being driven past.

In the confusion of the moment the absent-minded gentleman politely raised his hat and exclaimed:

"I beg your pardon, madam!"

Walking through the town in the afternoon he happened to stumble against a lady acquaintance of his who was walking in the opposite direction. In sudden recollection of his former adventure he called out in a tone by no means fraught with the former politeness:

"Is that you again, you brute?"

J. W. W.

The Wrong Kind of Soil.

MINISTER: "How is it, Jenkins, you cannot make your cows pay? Simpson down the lane has only got the same number, yet he seems to do very well."

Jenkins: "Well, yer see, sir, I ain't got the right kind of soil, and——"

Minister: "But what has the soil got to do with it?"

Jenkins: "It's like this, sir. Simpson's farm stands on chalky ground, and then, agen, yer see, he's nearer the pump than I be, and it all tells."

J. G.

Guessed Exactly the Same.

AT the late Birmingham Christmas Fat Cattle Show, two men were gazing with undisguised admiration at an exceedingly fine, fat beast.

"I wonder what his weight might be?" observed the city man, without any pretentions or knowledge of cattle and the like.

"Oh, it's easy to guess pretty nigh it," said the farmer-looking man who evidently regarded his companion with some contempt.

"Ah, well," responded the city man, "I think I can guess just as near as you can."

"Can you, indeed?" said the farmer. "Then I tell you that I'll bet you a sovereign that you can't?"

"Done! How much do you say?"

"A hundred and twenty-two stone."

"Well," said the city man, "I'll say a hundred and twenty-two stone, too. And I've won."

"What do you mean?" asked the farmer.

"Well, I said I'd guess as near as you, and I've done so—I've guessed exactly the same."

The bystanders with one accord took the city man's part, and the farmer reluctantly paid. C. R. F.

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A Bull in a Cricket Field.

WHILE staying at a little village I was playing cricket with some local players, when our game was rudely interrupted by a savage bull, which, breaking through the hedge, came charging right into our cricket ground, scattering us in all directions.

We had resigned ourselves to the loss of our afternoon's pleasure, when a stranger, who had been looking on with an amused smile, offered to shift the bull from the field. We gladly accepted his offer, wondering the while how he was going to perform the feat.

He took a cricket ball, and taking careful aim, threw it with all his might at the bull, hitting it right between the eyes. I never saw a more astonished animal in all my life than that bull. It jumped into the air, but no sooner had it reached the ground again than our friend, seizing a bat, and giving vent to a fearful shriek, hit the beast once more. The way that bull turned tail and fled, closely followed by its pursuer, who every now and then gave another unearthly shriek followed by a terrific blow from the bat, was a sight.

When we tried to thank the stranger he cut us short with the remark that he hadn't been twenty years a stockman in Australia without learning a little about bulls.

R. F.

Too Risky.

A BUTCHER, who had the misfortune to be cross-eyed, was going to kill a bull, so, calling the boy he employed, he told him to hold the beast by a rope fastened to his head, while he dealt the blow.

The boy, who was a son of the Emerald Isle, seemed rather fidgety about his task, and said:

"If yer plaze, sir, would yer moind informin' me if ye are going to strike where yer lookin'?"

"Of course," said the butcher sharply.

"Well, then," replied the boy, "ye can hold the bull yerself, fer shure Oi'm not going to, fer ye be lookin' straight at me. Shure if yer strikes where yer looks the old bull must live till the noo boy cums."

W. L.

The Bull and the Government Papers.

SOME members of the Ordnance Survey were touring in the south of Scotland.

In the prosecution of their calling they entered a field belonging to a crusty old farmer. Seeing the strangers after some manœuvres he could not understand, the farmer approached.

"What are ye wantin' in the field?" he cried.

"Oh, we have a right to go anywhere," returned one of the company. "We are surveying, and here are our Government papers."

"Paper here or paper there," returned the farmer, "oot ye gang oot o' my field."

"No, we shan't," returned the man, "and you are rendering yourself liable to prosecution for interrupting us."

The farmer said no more, but went over to his shed opening into the field and let out a vicious bull.

The bull no sooner saw the red coats than he went for them in full career. The surveyors snatched up their theodolite and flew for their lives, while the old farmer in great glee yelled after them:

"What are ye runnin' for? Can ye no show the bull yer Government papers?"

C. F.

DO YOU WANT A PORTRAIT ENLARGED?

AT the special request of a large number of readers we propose to repeat the offer made some time ago:

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Write your name and address plainly in ink on the back of the portrait you are sending us. Get a postal order for 7s. (if the photograph be that of a soldier or sailor get a 6s. postal order). Place all these in an envelope, or make a securely packed parcel of them, and address it to the PORTRAIT EDITOR, *Pearson's Weekly*, Henrietta Street, London, W.C. The money and coupon must accompany each order, otherwise your photograph will be returned to you.

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A Reduction of Threepence

on each photograph, when the order is for two or more, will be made, but a coupon must be sent for each enlargement required.

This offer will remain open until Saturday, August 25th, and orders will be treated in rotation. The sooner you send the sooner you will get your photograph.

A sample enlargement is on view at these offices. Next week we will publish other addresses where the enlargements may be seen.

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A CHINESE BRIDE.

A LUCKY SHOWER.

WHEN I was about fourteen years old my father, who had been a widower since my birth, took for his second wife the widow of an old friend, Captain Spinner. My father was quite an elderly man already, and the widow was nearly his own age. The terms of his offer were these:

"Mrs. Spinner, I have a fine old house with no one to keep it. You are the best housekeeper I know, and have no house to keep. You have hard times, I know. So have I, in another way. Think it over."

You see, it was not a romantic wooing. As for the widow—a portly woman with a high colour, who refused to let her hair grow grey so long as there were dyes to be obtained, she replied frankly:

"Oh, I don't want to think long over it. It's too good an offer. But I never do anything without consulting the captain."

As Captain Skinner had now been dead ten years, this might have startled a new acquaintance, but my father knew what it meant very well, and said:

"Very well, ma'am."

Then Mrs. Spinner brought forth a little triangular table and sent her compliments to Mr. Maddler, and would he spare her an hour.

Mr. Maddler came at once. He was a remarkable youth of the neighbourhood, in whose presence tables danced and raps were heard—not a professional medium, Mrs. Spinner used to say with a sigh, "they came too expensive for her," but a gifted amateur. Under his long white fingers the table danced about beautifully and these words were spelled out.

"Ship ahoy, my hearty! Shiver my timbers if I could choose a better mate for my late consort. Take her, with my blessing!"

Now, Captain Spinner had never said, "shiver my timbers," or called my father "my hearty," in life. But no one's attention was called to that fact, and the result was that Mrs. Spinner became Mrs. Hardman very shortly, and fulfilled my father's highest expectations.

She looked very well in the rich black silks and satins she could now afford to wear, made us very comfortable petted us as if we were babies, and kept the house in apple-pie order.

In return my father made no objection to a seance in the library every Friday, where we heard the three-legged table dancing away at a great rate.

Mr. Maddler always attended these meetings, but my father did not ask him at other times. He was a mere youth in those days, but I did not like him either, so he gained no foothold in the house.

On the whole we were very happy for four years, and my father had slowly grown very fond of his Jane Eliza—whom he had married because she was a good housekeeper—when death stepped in and struck him a fatal blow.

* * * * *

When he died I thought at first that I should never be myself again, but at eighteen one is elastic. As for my stepmother, she mourned in the deepest crape, and cried a great deal.

Then a change came o'er the spirit of her dream. I detected a curious alteration in her manner, and startled into curiosity, looked for its cause, and found it in Mr. Maddler. That young man now our constant visitor, was evidently paying his addresses to my step-mother, who was well on the way to sixty.

I liked her, for she had been so kind to me. I detested Maddler, who seemed a very sneaking and contemptible person. I had read the papers sufficiently to know that such unions generally ended very badly for the lady in the case.

As my father had made his will I had only a sufficient sum for my expenses until I came of age, and my stepmother could do what she pleased during her life-time.

Poor father never dreamed that his second wife would marry again, and had wished us to make our home together and be as mother and son.

I had never doubted the wisdom of the will before, but now I saw that once married to Maddler my stepmother would soon be induced to place everything in his hands.

I determined to speak plainly to her, and I did.

She was confused, and simpered a little, but confessed I was not wrong.

"For goodness' sake, consider what you are doing, mother!" I cried. "Can't you see the man's motive?"

"He adores me," she said.

"Do you believe that?" I cried.

She simpered again.

"He is young enough to be your grandson," I said.

"Not quite," she replied. "But, at all events, years make no difference. The spirits that hover about me, Mr. Maddler says, and so does his particular friend, Mr. Tucker, preserve my youth by making me inhale flower essences in my sleep. Really, I woke up the other night with the smell of lavender all about me. They say I don't look thirty, Mr. Maddler and Mr. Tucker do."

"You don't believe all that, do you?" I asked.

"Well, yes, I do," replied my stepmother. "And then Mr. Maddler is wildly in love with me."

"It's all nonsense," said I, with the brutal candor of youth. "You look every day your age. I'm a young man, and I assure you that though any one could respect

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and admire you as—a mother or an aunt, you know you're entirely past falling in love with. Why, your common sense must tell you that. And the table-tappings Maddler does with his fingers. I don't say all of them do, but he does. He is a rascal and all he wants is your money."

My stepmother could not for some time find breath to speak in reply to this. At last she said contemptuously:

"Money; oh, yes, that is what you think of! I should have been careful of your interests if you had behaved decently, but now—" she paused, and added, "the sooner we part the better."

The end of this was that the next day I took lodgings near the college.

In a month I heard that the day had been fixed for my stepmother's wedding. She had insisted on waiting a year and one week after the date of her widowhood before she changed her name.

Maddler went about smirking, arm in arm with his great friend, Mr. Tucker. From his spruce appearance I fancied that my stepmother had already been generous to him.

And so my father's money was to pass from me, for I should refuse to enter into any legal conflict, and the foolish woman who had been so good to me once, would end her days miserably.

The week of my stepmother's freedom had arrived, and she had blossomed out in colours suited to her idea of her well-preserved beauty, and wore costumes unsuitable to any but a girl in her early teens.

One day I saw her coming up the street thus attired, and stood still to look at her.

In past days my stepmother had had a certain dignity about her presence that became her age. Now she reminded me of the clown in the circus, dressed in female attire, and pretending to flirt with the ring-master. Her very high heels and very short skirts had much to do with it, the cut of her gown more.

It was the time when the "Dolly Varden" costumes had just been introduced. She wore one of flowered foulard—brightest pink. The jaunty hat had roses in it. We had been members of one household, and she still bore my father's name. A sense of shame crept over me and I was about to turn away when a heavy shower came suddenly upon us.

The elderly butterfly had only a white parasol, with pink fringe, with which to protect herself from the wild torrents of rain. Raising this she began to run. Her high heels betrayed her and she slipped, fell flat, and lay upon the path evidently unable to rise.

I was not brute enough to leave her thus. Hastening to her aid I found that she had sprained her ankle and broken her parasol, crushed her bonnet, and ripped the stitches that festooned the "pannier" of the costume. She was weeping bitterly and was a pitiable object.

It still poured; she was unable to walk; but shelter was close at hand. Under the shed of a carriage-maker was an old omnibus which was waiting its turn for repairs. Into this I helped my stepmother, piled cushions under her ankle, pulled down the blinds and made her as comfortable as possible.

"As soon as it stops pouring I'll get a cab and take you home," I said.

"You're very kind," she answered. "Oh! I'm in such pain, and if any one should see me!"

"I'll take care of that," I said; and as the rain began to drive in at the door I closed it. The next moment two men came running into the shed.

"Whew!" cried one of them, "we're lucky—high and dry after all, Tucker!"

"You're a lucky fellow, anyhow, Maddler," answered his companion. "Good to know a sort of mascot."

"Oh, dear! it is Mr. Maddler!" whispered my stepmother. "And such a sight as I am."

"Keep quiet, and he won't guess that you are here," I said, and silence reigned within the stage—but not without, Tucker was fond of talking.

"How is the widder?" he queried.

"Fat as ever," replied Maddler. "The sacrifice is near at hand now. Well, I fancy she'll be easy to manage; I was afraid of the cub."

"Meaning Tom Hardman!" queried Tucker.

"Of course," said Maddler. "But a quarrel between the two freed me from him. The old man never dreamt Mrs. Hardman would marry again, and everything is left just the way that suits me. Between my fascinations and the raps I can make the old lady do just what I please. How do you suppose I managed now for cash?"

"Don't know," said Tucker.

"The spirits advised her to give me a certain sum. I say, 'No no; pray, don't.' I declare that I'd rather not take it. The table insists, bangs frightfully; there are knocks everywhere. She draws a cheque, I put it in my pocket, kiss her hand, call her an angel."

"Can you keep it up though?" asked Tucker.

"No need after I've got the ring on her finger and her signature to a paper or two. I think she'll let me have my own way, and if so, all right; she'll get good treatment, but if she kicks I'll show her who is master," replied Maddler. "I sha'n't see much of her anyhow, after the knot is tied. We'll have jolly times, you and I. I don't desert old friends. You've helped me ever so much with the old woman."

"It's stopped raining," said Tucker.

"So it has," said Maddler. "Come along."

We were alone again, my stepmother and I. I looked at her, she was white as a ghost.

"I do feel so ill, Tom!" she said.

Poor woman! between pain and shame and anger and the sudden murder of her vanity, she was in a wretched state and I felt very, very sorry for her.

I did my best for her. I interviewed the carriage-maker, got him to allow me to put two horses to the omnibus, and so convey the sufferer home. Having been put to bed and the doctor sent for, I waited to see if I could be of any use, but it was not until twilight fell that my step-mother sent for me.

"Better?" I asked, kindly, as I entered the room.

"Yes, Tom," she answered, quite in her old way, "and very thankful. I think good spirits—your poor pa maybe—made me fall down, and sent you to put me in that old 'bus, just to save me from the awful fate I was rushing into."

"Certainly it happened providentially," I said.

"I see what a goose I've been," she continued, "and how honestly you spoke, though very plainly, that time when I was so vexed, Tom. I see it as you did, now, and thank goodness it's not too late. Tom, won't you come back and be my son again? I seem to need taking care of."

For answer I kissed her, but I did not think my whole duty done to my stepmother until I had kicked Mr. Maddler down the steps, which I did promptly the next time he called.

R. A. M.

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A MISERABLE SINNER.

If there was one person who thoroughly applauded the prospect of war with South Africa it was Thornton Frere, Captain in the—th Fusiliers and a fine soldier into the bargain. For the war had given him a wife.

It had come about in this way.

The engagement between the gallant captain of forty-five and pretty Ruth Waring, aged twenty-two, had been hanging fire for over a year, and though it was perfectly plain to everyone that the soldierly-looking man was head over ears in love with the girl, she hung back, and it was not until the war was declared that things came to a climax, and from being hurriedly engaged they were even more hurriedly married.

There had been a short honeymoon lasting a few days and then the husband was called away to join his regiment, leaving his bride to go back to her mother and spend the next few months in weary waiting.

When the parting words came to be said it was the bitterest moment in Captain Frere's life, for under the blunt and somewhat homely exterior of the soldier, he owned a heart as tender as a woman's.

Love, coming late in life as it had done, seemed to have gathered strength and force in all the years it had been lying dormant, and it was a feeling almost akin to worship that the great, strong-hearted man felt for his wife.

It was one Tuesday night towards the end of November that the Fusiliers and one of the mounted Batteries had orders to march at once through the enemy's lines and take up a position ready for the following morning, when they were to attack and turn the enemy's left flank in order that the main army might catch them.

The night was pitch dark when the two regiments filed slowly out of camp. The men were forbidden to speak, or on any account to strike a match. Everyone moved as quietly as possible, even the mules seemed to tread softly.

All went well for about six miles; the men, hardened by their late experience into utter indifference to their present danger, were trudging along cursing under their breath at the inforced silence, when, without a moment's warning, hundreds of Boer horsemen seemed to spring out of the ground itself.

Taken by surprise, but realizing they had been led into a trap by the guide, a scene almost bordering on panic ensued, made worse by the inability of the soldiers to distinguish friends from foes owing to the darkness that enveloped them.

Luckily for Captain Frere, he was spared all memory of what happened, for he lay stunned by a heavy blow on the head from the butt-end of a rifle, and it was not until the sky began to lighten in the far east with the coming dawn that he returned to consciousness, to find himself lying in a dry ditch, almost covered with brushwood, where he had fallen.

Getting up with difficulty, for his limbs were stiff and cramped, he crawled to a rising in the uneven ground, and although it was still dark he managed to discern the bodies of several men lying on the grass.

Gazing about him he noticed on his left a plantation of trees. Feeling giddy from the blow on his head he made his way over to their shelter, and scrambling through the bushes, almost fell headlong over the body of a man that was stretched full length on the ground.

At first Frere thought he was dead, but in another moment the man had opened his eyes.

"Where am I?" he said in a dazed voice. Then glancing at the Captain's uniform he added: "Thank Heaven, you're English."

There was a puzzled expression on his face, as though he were struggling to recollect something. Suddenly his face brightened.

"I remember it all now! You are one of the chaps that got cut up last night?"

Frere nodded. "How did you manage to get here?" he asked, noticing the man wore ordinary civilian's dress.

"I volunteered to take some dispatches through the enemy's lines. They let me come because I knew every inch of the country round about here. I should have got through all right if it hadn't been for those brutes lying in hiding for you. I came right on them and got a bullet in my shoulder before I could get away. I managed to crawl here and must have fainted. When I came to, there was a fight going on. Some of your fellows got away, but they took most of them prisoners. Then the Boers went round and collected up the prisoners. It was awful lying here helpless."

Frere's face looked black and he muttered a curses under his breath. But the man beside him was wounded, and needed attention.

"Let me have a look at your wound."

He knelt down and bending over the younger man, endeavoured to find out the extent of his injury.

In removing his coat an unopened letter addressed, in an unmistakably feminine handwriting, to "Charles Cleaver, Esq," fell from the inside pocket.

The wounded man picked it up.

"This has been following me for over a month. I only got it just before starting yesterday. Fancy reading it here!"—and he gave a feeble attempt at a laugh.

Frere was busy examining the wound.

"The Boers have not done for you this time," he exclaimed cheerfully. "You've lost a lot of blood, but it's not dangerous."

"I'm glad of that," said Cleaver, in a relieved voice, "for I don't want to peg out yet," and he tore open his letter with a significant smile.

Captain Frere lifted his head and listened. His quick ears had caught the sound of horse's hoofs on the veld. Cautiously parting the bushes he looked through. Not twenty yards away stood a small Boer pony, contentedly munching the long grass.

It was the work of a moment to catch the animal, in fact, it offered no resistance, and tethering it securely to a neighbouring tree, Frere hurried back.

"What a stroke of luck!" he exclaimed. "A pony, and riderless, too!"

But a glance at his companion told him something was wrong. He lay back, his face ghastly white, his eyes closed. He had fainted.

Frere's eyes fell on the opened letter. He seemed to take the situation in at a glance.

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"Poor chap!" he muttered compassionately, as he raised the young man's head on his knee and endeavoured to force a little brandy from his own flask between the tightly-clenched teeth: "that letter brought bad news."

Presently his efforts were rewarded and Charles Cleaver opened his eyes.

Frere laid his head back gently. "How do you feel?" he inquired.

"I'm all right now," the wounded man replied huskily, and then relapsed into silence, staring stonily before him.

Frere noticed how drawn and haggard his face looked. In the last few minutes he seemed to have aged years.

"Look here, you chap," he said at length, after waiting in vain for his companion to break the silence: "every minute we lose now is precious. If we are going to try and get away we had better make a start at once. It will be daylight in an hour and a half. While you dropped off just then I managed to secure a Boer pony. He'll do for one of us—unfortunately the animal is too small for both. Don't give up, man," as the wounded man made an impatient movement with his hand, "there is hope for us yet."

Cleaver turned his eyes on the speaker's face, and the hopeless expression in them disconcerted Frere.

"That fellow has had a nasty shock," he mused to himself.

"I can't ride," Cleaver said, "my back is too painful. You take the pony, sir, and make for camp—I shall stop here."

"Bosh!" said the Captain, "I shall do nothing of the kind. Do you suppose I am going to leave you and go off, young man? Why, it would be simply suicidal in your state."

But Cleaver refused to move or be moved.

"I shall stay where I am," he persisted, doggedly.

Captain Frere tried all his persuasive powers, but to no good.

Charles Cleaver was obstinate.

"Then there is nothing to be done but for both of us to sit here and see what the day brings forth," and the Captain took a seat beside his wounded companion, hoping that his latest plan of action would bring him to his senses.

And he was not disappointed.

"I can't allow this, sir, really I can't," protested Cleaver earnestly. "Because I insist on staying here it is no reason why you should. You have friends, no doubt, who are watching the papers every morning for news of you. I have nobody. That is why I don't care. If I had something to live for it would be different—it was different before I had that letter. You don't know what it is to lose the only soul in the world that has made your life worth living."

"No, I don't know, but I can understand if it is a woman," Frere replied in a low voice, for he was thinking of Ruth. Then turning to his companion he laid his hand on his arm. "Death," he said gently, and, his, was a wonderfully soothing voice, "comes to all of us."

"It isn't death," cried Cleaver, lifting himself up on his elbow, and looking at Frere with blazing eyes. "She has married, I tell you—married!"

There was a long, uncomfortable silence. Presently Cleaver began to speak.

"I came to this wretched country four years ago. I had no money, or we should have been married. Her people were poor, and I had nothing but an old name and an estate mortgaged up to the hilt. Then they had an invalid sister to keep."

Frere felt a rising interest, for Ruth's little sister was a cripple.

"I've worked day and night, slaved far more than any Kaffir—I got a farm at last, and I was just beginning to make a good thing out of it when the war broke out. And now she is married—sacrificed herself to save her family from starving—you might read me what she says, sir, I don't think I got through it all."

Frere picked up the letter. There was something strangely familiar about the handwriting!

"Dearest Charlie," it ran. "This is the last time I shall ever address you in the old way, for to-morrow I am to be married. You must try and not be angry with me, dear, for he has asked me over and over again, and there was nothing else to be done. Last month mother heard that all the little that remained of her money was gone. It meant starvation, for though I could have made enough to keep myself, there was mother and the children to think of, and the boys ought to be going to a good school now. Charlie, you must try and not hate him, for he has been so kind to all of us, and he knows nothing about you. Mother would never let me tell him—and when he asked me again to marry him and said he was under orders to go to South Africa, I had not the heart to tell him I was engaged to you. Don't judge me too harshly, for you don't know what it is to marry a man I can never love. I feel I am wronging one of the best and kindest friends

The soldierly-looking man was head over ears in love with the girl.

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The two men clasped hands.

I ever had when my heart can never be his, for I love you, Charlie, and you only! Your broken-hearted ——"

"I can't read the signature—it's blotted," broke off the Captain, "but she does not tell you the man's name."

"I know who he is—a captain of the Fusiliers, and old enough to be her father," said Cleaver, bitterly.

A spasm of pain crossed Frere's face, he snatched at the letter, and tried to decipher the signature.

"And his name?" he asked quietly, without looking up.

"Thornton Frere."

Five—ten minutes passed and neither man moved. Frere sat bolt upright, with stern, set features. Suddenly his face relaxed; a smile lit up and transformed it, making it appear almost handsome.

"Yes," he said slowly, and there was nothing in his calm, even voice to rouse Cleaver's suspicion—"it's a facer, but not such a facer as you think. I knew Frere well—he was my greatest chum in the regiment—" he paused, as though the words would not come out, "and he died from his wounds received two days ago in a skirmish."

In the few moments of silence after he had learnt the awful truth Frere had decided what to do. His idol had been smashed, dragged ruthlessly from the pedestal he had placed it on; broken so that no human hands could piece it together again. He knew how Ruth had never loved him—it was but the reflection of his own love he had read in her eyes. And yet he felt no anger at the knowledge, only pity, a great pity that surged up in his heart and blotted out every other feeling. For his had been the fault, not hers; he could see the folly of his marriage now. What was there about him for a young girl to love—he, greyhaired and old beyond his years? Cleaver was both young and good-looking. Ah, he understood it all now—and yet he had been so ridiculously happy.

"Dead!" gasped Cleaver, aghast.

"There is no doubt about it, for I helped to bury him. There is nothing in your way now—you can marry his widow—she will be rich, for he left her all his money. What you had better do is to get on that pony, ride for all you're worth, and deliver those dispatches. I'll lie here in hiding until you can send some men to bury the poor chaps who fell last night. But there is only one stipulation I make, and that is, that you don't risk your life any more, but get back to England and take care of Frere's widow. Before he died he left her as a sacred charge to me, but in face of that letter and what you've told me I think I am right in passing that duty over to you. Frere was a peculiar chap, but I feel sure he would wish it, for her happiness was everything to him. Come, is it a bargain?"

Cleaver seemed quite overcome. "You are very good," he said brokenly. "If ever I get home and we're married, she shall never have cause to repent it, or you either, sir. But your news about her husband has knocked me over—so soon, poor chap," he said feelingly.

"Yes, poor chap," echoed the elder man as he stared out across the veld with unseeing eyes. "But she made him very happy, and he died happy, too, perfectly happy," he added with conviction.

"I'm glad of that, it will comfort Ruth. But I can't go alone, sir. You would not leave me, remember."

"That was different. You are under orders to deliver those dispatches, and besides I'm not wounded."

Frere was right—the dispatches were important.

"Then I'll go, sir."

Half lifting, half carrying him, Frere managed to get Cleaver into the saddle.

His wound was stiff and the pain from it almost made him faint, but a pull from Frere's whiskey flask put fresh life in him. On the flap of an envelope which he took from his pocket Frere scribbled these lines:

"Good-bye, Marry Cleaver if he can make you happy. Remember, your happiness, before anything else, has been the one desire of your devoted husband,

"T. F."

Placing the scrap of paper inside the case which held his wife's miniature, with a long, last look Frere handed it to Cleaver.

"Give it to her—it is something her husband gave me and contains his last message."

"I'll not forget. But why not keep it, and give it to her yourself?"

"There is more fighting to be done and who knows—?" Frere never finished the sentence. Cleaver understood.

The two men clasped hands. Frere watched the pony and its rider till both were out of sight.

Then taking out his revolver he examined and cocked it. He knelt down.

"Heaven have mercy on me a miserable sinner!" he said in a firm voice.

Raising the revolver to his forehead he uttered the words "For your sake, Ruth," and pulled the trigger.

And that night, when Charles Cleaver ran out to greet the man who had saved his life, he met the rescue party bringing their silent burden into camp.

GWENDOLYN STANHOPE.

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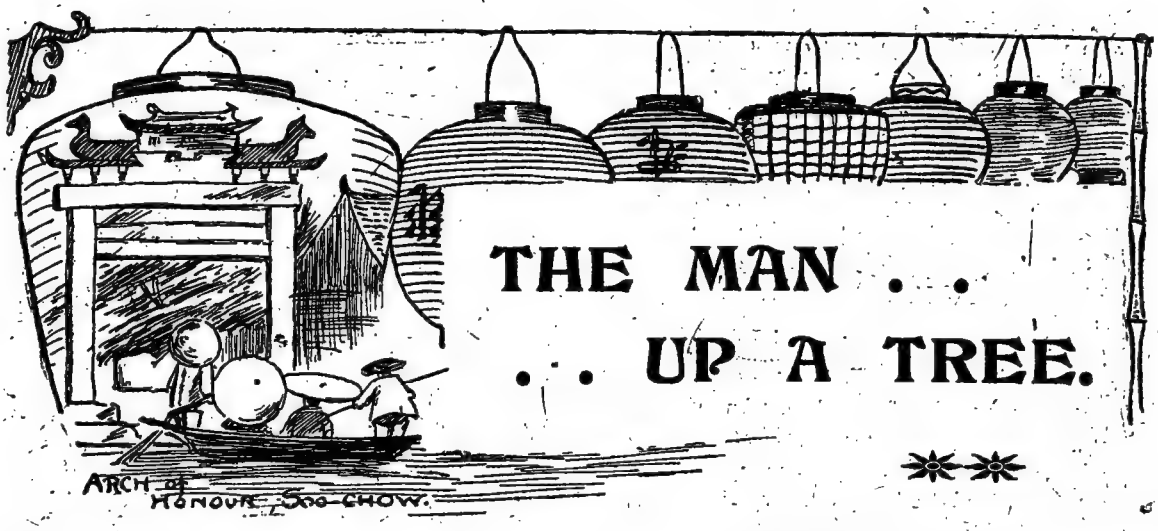

THE MAN . . . . UP A TREE.

I AM something of a reformer not only in theory, but in practice, and when I discovered the man up a tree I determined to try my hand at elevating his moral standard.

I hold that no man is so bad that he can't be reformed to a certain extent, and I hold that any way to bring about a betterment of his moral character is justifiable. I mean by that, to speak frankly and plainly, that, while some men can be reformed by sympathy and encouragement, others need a rap on the head with a cricket bat to arouse their dormant integrity and ambition.

I had extended sympathy and more or less financial aid to this man up a tree. In a burst of confidence he had confessed to me that he had been a swindler, a gambler and a great deal more. He had been "laid away" in prison two or three times during his career, had sailed under a dozen different names, and he might have admitted a murder or two had I not cut him short.

I draw the line at murder. I can set out with a good deal of confidence in the task of reforming burglars, highway robbers, incendiaries, perjurers, and so forth, but when it comes to murderers I hesitate.

Having become interested in this man, I didn't want him to own up to anything worse than robbing a blind man or burning an orphan home. He had come to me as a man who had at last seen the error of his ways and longed to turn over a new leaf and be counted with the good and respectable.

He had given me the name of H. Jones-Jones. It struck me that there was an extra amount of Jones about him, but the name is an honest one, and I didn't find fault about it.

He was a man of about forty-five, with all the evidences of his career in his face, but I didn't look for babylike innocence in his eyes.

When he threw himself upon my mercy, as it were—when he made a clean breast of his wicked career and added that if anyone would point out the path of honesty he would turn into it and travel on without a limp, I agreed to take him in hand.

He had whiskers with which the police were acquainted, and I sent him to a barber's shop. He had clothes which gave him away altogether, and I bought him a modest suit of blue.

Then I gave him money for a week's holiday from crime, and when the holiday was over we were to see what further could be done. I took my week off at the same time and spent it amid the fresh buttermilk and dew-kissed gorse of the country.

On the second night of my stay, as I sat by my open window at midnight to finish the last of my cigar and wonder if my Jones-Jones had kept straight dur ng the last forty-eight hours, I suddenly caught sight of him on the ground below.

It was a farmhouse at which I was stopping. I had a corner room, and at that corner of the hous stood a large apple tree. I had obser ed that a big limb branched out so close to my window that I could have descended by it. What you can descend by you can also ascend by.

I had no sooner caught sight of Jones-Jones at the foot of the tree, at an hour when everybody was supposed to be in bed, than I unders ood that he intended pay ng me a secret visit. How he had tracked me to my lair was of no consequence. Why he should imagine that I had broug it any great am unt of money with me on my week's outing I didn't stop to think. Indeed, I am not sure that he had tracked me. In looking for lodgings in the country he might have stumbled upon the place. He might have thought the open window belonged to some other boarder.

No matter how it was, however. Mr. Jones-Jones had no sooner begun to climb that apple tree than I made ready to receive him with all due hospitality. There was no stick in the room, but the water jug had been filled for the night and made a good weapon. Armed with that I took my stand on one side of the window and waited.

Jones-Jones was not an impetuous man. He had all night in which to climb and creep. and it was at least a quarter of an hour before he grasped my window sill with his hands and drew his body into the opening. I waited with patience until he had reached a particular position and then brought the jug down on his head.

The idea was to administer an anæsthetic, and it was a success. He pitched forward into the room with a long drawn sigh, and I lighted the lamp and took from his wrist the "billy" which he had bought in town with my money to use as a "cracker" in case his sleeping victim woke up before being plundered.

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Then I forced brandy between his teeth, bathed his face with water, and in the course of a quarter of an hour my midnight visitor had so far recovered his senses that I ventured to remark:

"Well, Jones-Jones, why didn't you tell me that you were coming, that I might be on the lookout for you?"

Jones-Jones sat up. He didn't recognize me. He himself had a different look on his face. That dissipated but yet crafty look had disappeared, and in its place was wonderment if not honesty. It was my wicked man in the flesh, but not in the spirit.

He got off the floor and felt the bump on his head and sat down on a chair, and it was a long five minutes before he said:

"Sir, my name is Brown-Brown, and I don't exactly understand the situation. Am I in your room, or are you in mine?"

"I believe it's my room," I replied, "but since you arrived late and the landlord is asleep you can stop until morning."

"Very kind of you, sir—extremely kind. As to this bump on my head—is it a bump or not? If it's a bump how did I receive it?"

"You hit your head on the door in the darkness, I believe."

"Ah! Just so. Very stupid of me, but it's only a trifle. Now, then, Mr. Ashmere, as to the business in hand. If you think you can advance me a hundred pounds, I am sure I can make good use of it."

It took me a little while to understand, but by and by I discovered that Jones-Jones had disappeared and Brown-Brown had taken his place.

Jones-Jones was a shady character who wanted to reform; Brown-Brown was a poor but honest man who wanted to start in business. He knew nothing whatever of Jones-Jones. He picked up the conversation as if he had been talking about the business when the accident happened.

He called me by another name than my own, and it was plain to me that he was also another man. I sounded him about crime and prison, but he solemnly assured me that he had never been arrested. He was Brown-Brown so far as his name went, but as for his past history he was rather hazy on the subject.

I had turned Jones-Jones, the shady character, back into Brown-Brown, the honest man, by a knock on the head. It was rapid transit reformation, and I looked upon the problem as solved. Having been willing to assist a shady character, I could not refuse an honest man.

When my week was up, we went back to town together, and I gave Brown-Brown money enough to set up in business. He had on the clothes I had bought Jones-Jones. He had the hair, the eyes, the mouth and the build of the shady character, but there had been a change of souls.

So far as the present went he was bright and talkative, but when asked of the past he looked puzzled and could not understand what I meant. The doctors a reed with me that it was the whack on the head that had made Brown-Brown of Jones-Jones and that the police ought to be given full power to go round breaking water jugs over suspects' craniums; but, alas, that was a part of the business we hadn't the foresight to discover and prepare for.

My man prospered wonderfully well. People said he was a little eccentric, but he was honest and a hard worker. In one year he had paid me back half my money and built up a good business.

One day a detective entered the shop to make a purchase. He had known Jones-Jones as a burglar. He knew that Jones-Jones had a crooked finger on his right hand and a mole on his left cheek. When he discovered that Brown-Brown had these same identification marks, he began to look at him more closely, and by and by he made up his mind that the old burglar stood before him. He was so sure of it that he started to make an arrest.

Brown-Brown was an honest man, but in his surprise he started to bolt off. As he ran out of his shop and down the street, pursued by the detective, he encountered a policeman who tapped him on the head with his truncheon. Brown-Brown went down like a log and was carted off to the station. I was present when his senses returned, and you can imagine my feelings when he sat up and said:

"Well, you've got me at last, but I gave you a run for it. You fellers ain't half sharp."

"You are Jones-Jones, the burglar," said the sergeant.

"Of course I am, and the sharpest one in the country. Is it that bank business you want me for this time?"

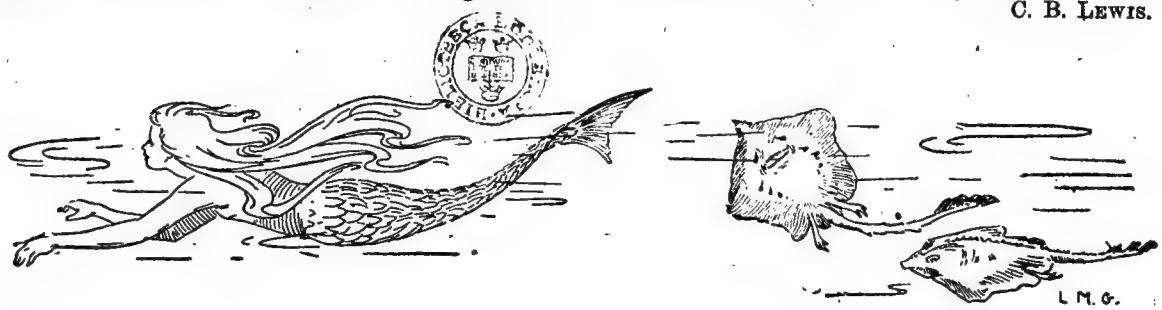
"Mr. Brown-Brown"—I began as I stepped forward, but the burglar stopped me with:

"Who in the name of goodness is Brown-Brown?"

Then I realised how it was. I had smashed Jones-Jones, the burglar, over the head with a water jug, and changed him into Brown-Brown, the honest shopkeeper. The policeman had smashed Brown-Brown with his truncheon, and changed him back into Jones-Jones, the burglar.

The taps on the head had done the business. My tap was all right, and I had founded a new theory upon it and invested a hundred pounds in cash. But I hadn't foreseen that a second tap might come any day, as come it did, and my theory had been knocked into a cocked hat, and I was fifty pounds out of pocket.

C. B. Lewis.



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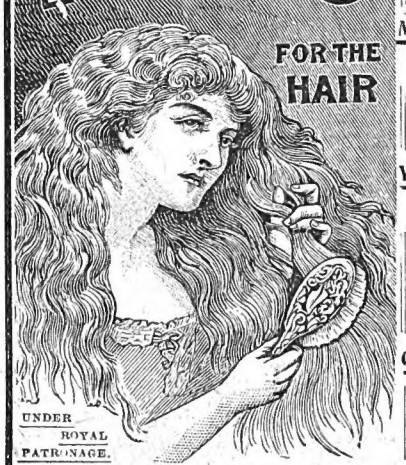

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The Brain Gymnasium

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver plated pencil-cases or ten popular six shilling novels, to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by first post on Monday, August 20th, 1900.

Readers are invited to submit puzzles, acrostics, conundrums, word-squares, etc., for publication on this page. A gold-plated pencil-case will be given to each reader whose attempts are used. All attempts must be vouched for as original, and, of course, it is distinctly understood that the sender of a puzzle must neither compete in the competition nor divulge to anyone the solution. Any reader found infringing this rule will be severely dealt with.

No. 187.

The following letters, when re-arranged, will form a well-known proverb:

AAA DD EE F III MM NNN OO R TTT W.

No. 188.

Make a square word from the equivalents of the following:

A BEVERAGE; BRAINLESS; THE NAME OF A COD; TO MAKE CLEAR; TO REVIVE.

No. 189.

One-sixth of simple, plus one-fifth of think, plus two-thirds of aerial, plus one sixth of system, plus one-fifth of anger, plus two-ninths of beanfeast.

The sum will give the name of a bird.

No. 190.

The first and third letters of equivalents of the following, when re-arranged, will form the name of an English seaside resort:

A BIRD; A PAMPHLET; TO SEIZE; CONVENIENT.

No. 191.

My initials and finals will form the names of two Shakesperian characters:

AN EASTERN COUNTY; A BIRD; A VESSEL; A MUSICAL T RM; A VEGETABLE; AN EASTERN OFFICIAL; A TOWN IN JAPAN.

No. 192.

To feed my SECOND with my FIRST
Was once a sacred rite;
And yet now in this latter day
To strike it gives delight.

Of magic LAST we all have read,
Of power a fabled source;
Now make it Greek, and we shall have
A bright, celestial horse.

My WHOLE at best a dangerous thing,
In spite of care or wire;
And to a city, so 'tis said,
It brought disaster dire.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 169 to 174.

The prize of £2 has been awarded this week to Mr. J. D. Champion, Quethiock, Liskeard, whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

A copy of "Fortune's My Foe," by J. Bloundelle Burton, has been sent to:

Miss E. Hill, Barnes, S.W.
F. White, King's Cross, N.
J. Cockerill, Kingsland Road, N.
O.R. Frankenstein, Regent's Park
John Boyd, Glasgow.
D. G. Jelley, Plumstead, Kent
William Robertson, Glasgow.
Miss Maud Abbott, Norbiton.
F. Watson, Morpeth.
James Thain, Bowes Park, N.

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES.

Nos. 175 to 180.

No. 175. SCOTT
CELIA
OLDEN
TIERS
TANSY

No. 176. Theatres. The-a-tres (rest).

No. 177. H. RIDER HAGGARD.

No. 178. Gownsman.

No. 179. LEAF.

No. 180.

B	enga	L
E	br	O
R	ubico	N
L	anlan	D
I	dah	O
N	ankl	N

Berlin—London.

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" half	6 5 0

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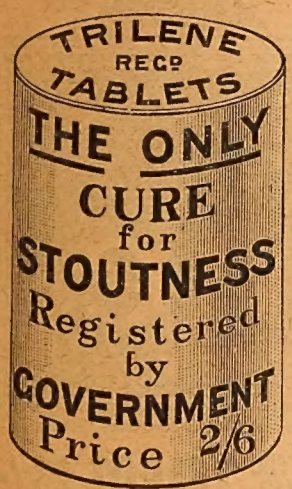
ALL FAT PEOPLE

Can be **CURED** by taking

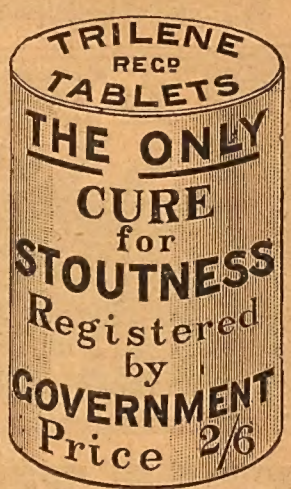
TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send **2s. 6d.** to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Mrs. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

MISS CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 8lb., but am now 11st. and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 21lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me. "Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

Miss NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Riseholme Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

MRS. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

Mr. MCLEOD, 44, Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to ake more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

MRS. H. COX, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

MR. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

MRS E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 46 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 23. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess FURSTENBERG, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

MRS. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver nr Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 62 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

Miss F. L. BALL, 47 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrews, Bristol, writes: "I am quite cured through your Tablets. They improve the figure, and greatly relieve shortness of breath."

Miss PATIENT, of Woodberry, Tydon Bois: "Feel great benefit from Tablets. I have lost 2 st. and am sufficiently reduced."

Mrs. DREW, of 1 Bellevue Gardens, The Nursery, Devizes, writes: "I took Tablets some years ago; they soon reduced me and I have not got stout since. Send me a box for my mother."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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TO BE HAD OF ALL GROCERS &c.

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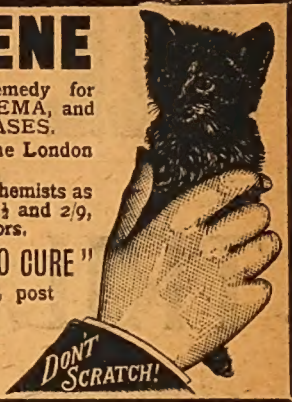

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